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PUNK PLANET

\$3.50

issue #29 • February 1999

MAGAZINE



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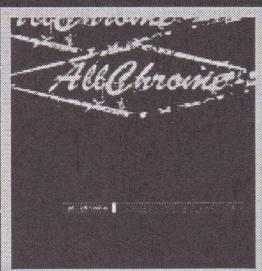


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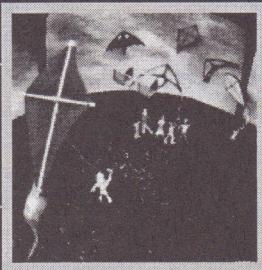
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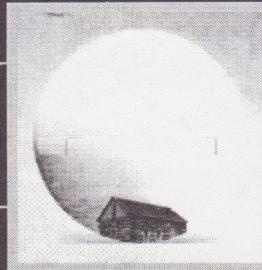
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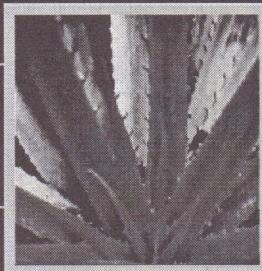
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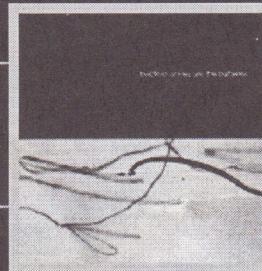
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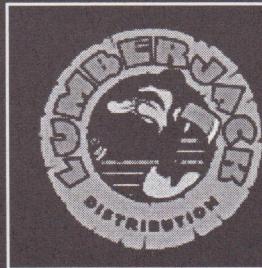
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THE LAST HURRAH p. 76

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Daniel Sinker
the hard rhymers

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the juice

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minister of information

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for PP31 May/June 1999

(for those keeping score, that's our five-year anniversary)

Ads not reserved will get in, but you have no say as to what issue. Any ads received after deadline may run in the following issue. Those are the risks ... Are you the gambling type?
the risks

T

The week before this issue went to press, the world changed. Within just a few days of each other, bombs had flown into Baghdad and our twice-elected president was impeached by the House of Representatives. To say that it's been difficult to concentrate on the final details of the printing of this issue would be the understatement of the year.

It was one of those moments in time where you honestly had no idea what would happen next. As I type this, it still seems like it is. Bombings have been temporarily put on hold and the Senate is thinking about some sort of compromise for Clinton, but at this point nothing can be guaranteed.

Faced with all of this change, it was a struggle to figure out if we had the time or the energy to deal with either topic for the issue you currently clutch in your hands. Unfortunately, the answer was that we didn't. News travels faster than we do and sometimes we have to miss the boat. However, we have done some excellent reporting on both subjects in the past.

To those of you wanting more information about Iraq than your local paper or CNN is giving you, I'd highly recommend you check out *Punk Planet* 25 and 26—May/June and July/August respectively.

Issue 25 introduces us to the issues surrounding the current crises with Iraq in two parts. First through a conversation with Jon Strange, who managed—with the help of many others—to disrupt the CNN "Town Meeting" on Iraq in February of this year. Many progressive thinkers credit this disruption with thwarting the US's attempts at getting public

support of its anti-Iraq policies. Also in that issue is "Back to Iraq," *Punk Planet* associate editor Joel Schalit's article deconstructing the roots of US/Iraqi relations. Both are must-reads on the subject of Iraq.

Our coverage of Iraq continued in PP26 with Jon Strange's diary of his trip with a humanitarian group behind "enemy" lines to bring much-needed medical supplies to the Iraqi people. It's a moving and angering story—and one that most major media outlets have chosen to ignore.

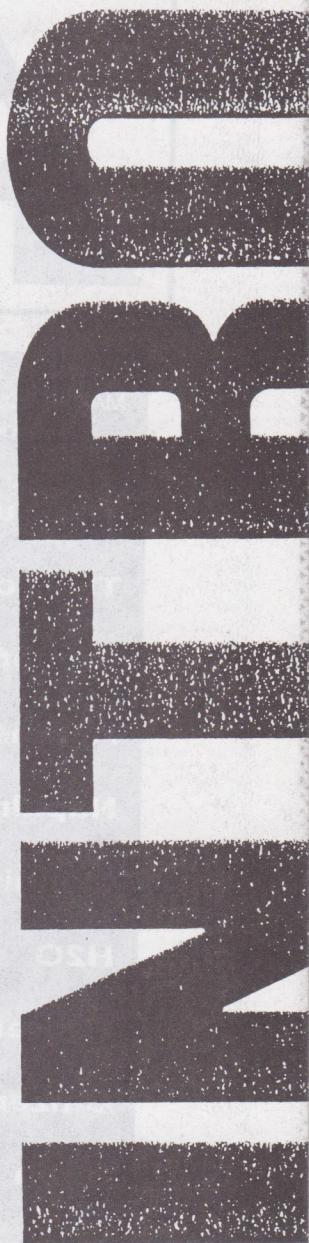
On the impeachment issue, just last issue [PP28] we printed 10 reasons to *really* not like Bill Clinton. With the current climate of partisan Clinton bashing, we felt it was necessary to point out some legitimate reasons to hate the guy. The list certainly wasn't complete, but it's a good primer on the *real* legacy of Bill Clinton. From his draconian welfare "reform" to the recent unnecessary—and highly suspect—bombings in Sudan and Afghanistan; from NAFTA to his retreat from universal healthcare, we tried to expose him for what he is.

I know it's strange to use the introduction of the issue to point out highlights from past issues, but considering what's going on right now, I think it's appropriate.

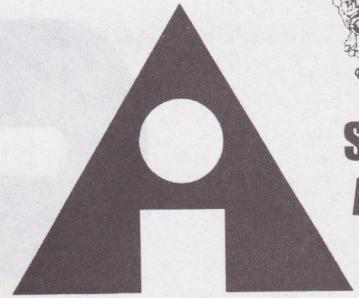
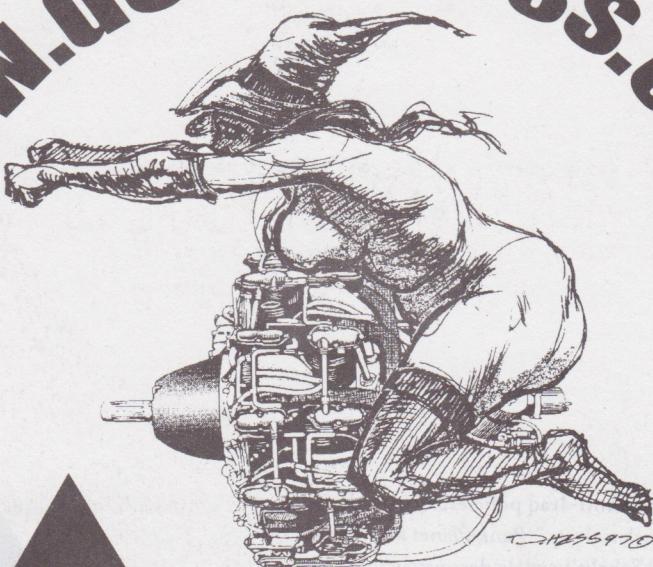
Speaking of this issue, we've put an unbelievable amount of work into creating an all-new *Punk Planet* for you. I hope you enjoy it.

Have a great February.

DAN



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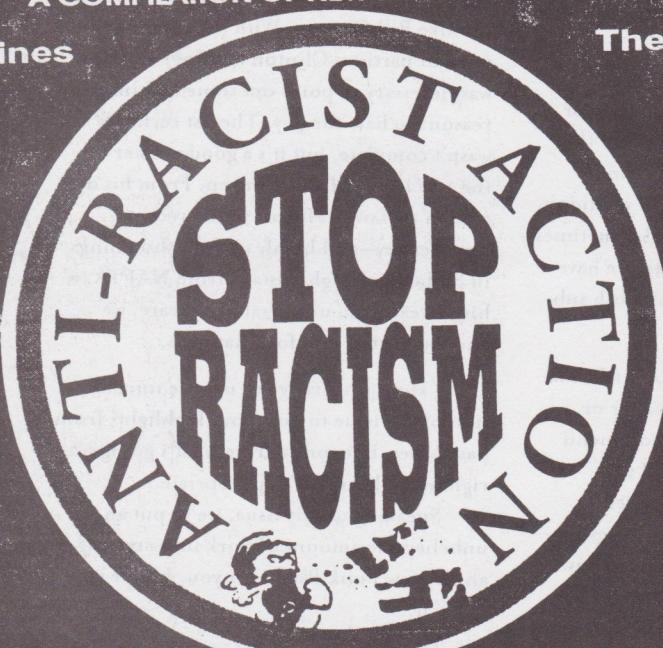
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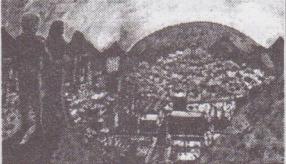
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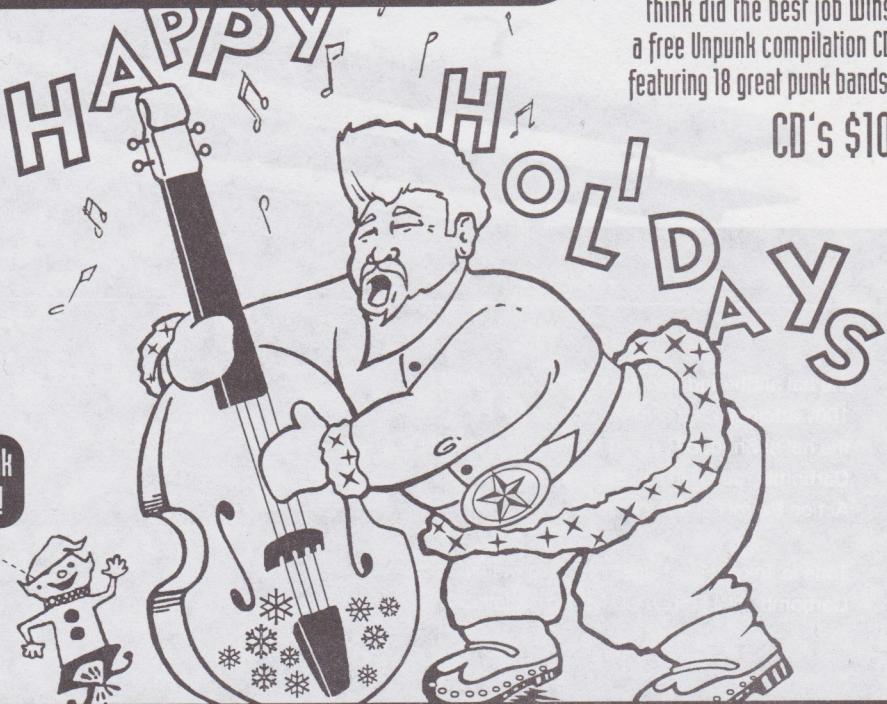
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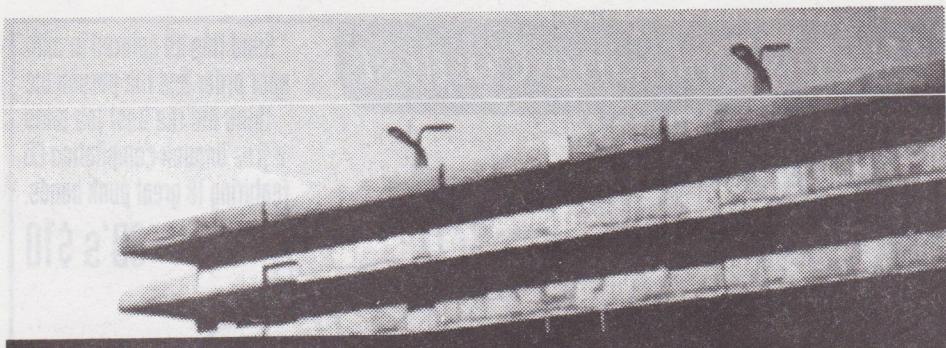
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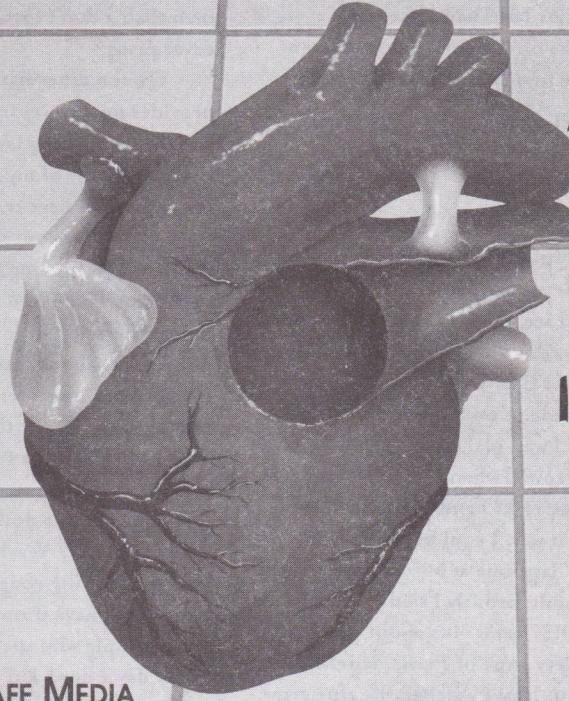
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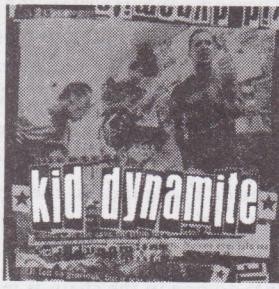
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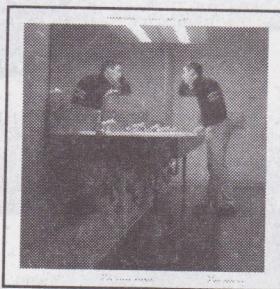
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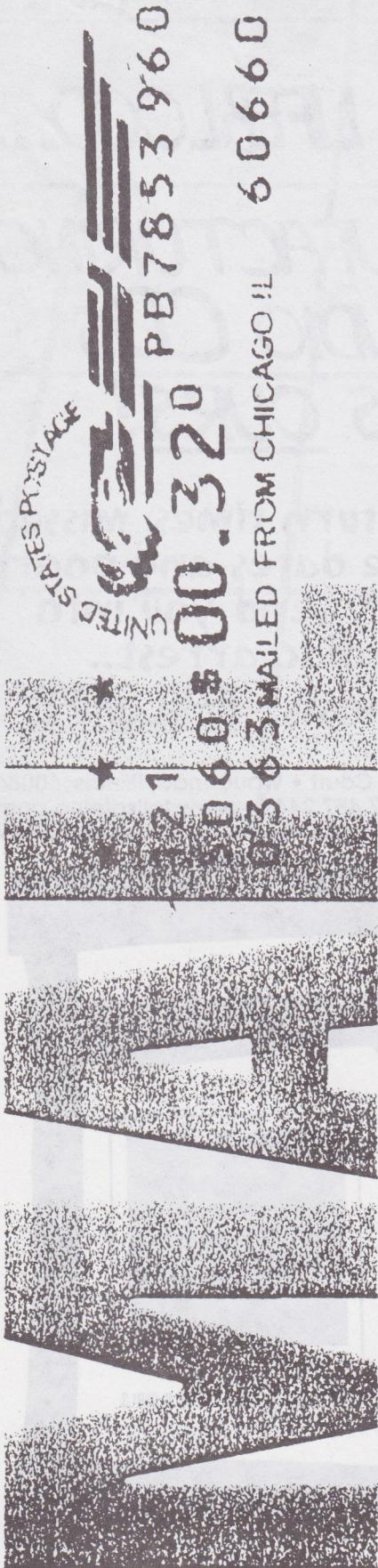
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Price Increase Debate

"Punk" Planet -

So your zine is going to cost \$3.50 now, huh? What else would I expect from a magazine that has a full color cover, a barcode and even put a major label band like Chumbawamba on the cover. Do you even remember the first time you sold out?

Pat Buckley
Seattle, WA

Most Precious Planeteers,

I picked up *Punk Planet* #28 yesterday at Generation Records in New York City. I get excited when I see a new issue of *PP* on the counter there, as I then know that for the next few weeks I'll have good reading material for the train ride to work every day.

So there I was, glancing over the beautiful full color cover, when my eyes locked onto the upper right hand corner of the cover. There it was. I couldn't believe it at first. It said, "last time at \$2". What? A price increase? Simultaneously I said to myself, "What the hell?" and "It's about time".

I have every issue of *Punk Planet* dating back to issue 9. I have watched the zine grow, and have seen its standards raised upon the release of every new issue. Since I started reading *PP*, the cover price has been \$2. The older issues I have consist of roughly 100 pages, and are black ink on newsprint. From what I understand, *PP* was completely volunteer run back then, therefore making a \$2 cover price reasonable enough for the zine to thrive. But since then, much has changed. The heavy stock covers. Making the transition from black, to spot color, to full color covers. *PP* began paying its writers for their work. A 50% increase in the number of pages and an increase in circulation. So every time I bought a new issue of *PP*, I would think to myself, "How much longer can they go on charging only \$2 for this?". Once the zine leaves *PP* headquarters, then goes through Mordam, then to the retail space/distro where it is sold, you'd have to think that no one in the chain is making too much money off of each issue if the cover price is only \$2.

Maximum Rock and Roll has been charging \$3 ever since I can remember. For what? *MRR* is roughly 50% ads. It's printed on easily-destroyed newsprint, which makes my hands a mess. Half of it is literally and

graphically unreadable, and the few pieces that you can manage to get through are usually boring as sin. Regardless of this, I continue to buy *MRR*, mostly just to keep up to date on new releases and for the writings of 1 or 2 columnists that I enjoy monthly. Other than that, I don't feel that it's worth the cover price.

On the other hand, *PP* consistently provides quality writing, interesting articles, visually stimulating layout, and an overall package worthy of my money. It lets its readers know that there is a world other than their CD collection. And that there are things worth fighting for other than SXE and veganism. That there's nothing wrong with being interested in something other than punk rock. So for this, I say congratulations on the price increase. Hopefully it will lead to bigger and better things for *Punk Planet*.

I will continue to read *Punk Planet* regardless of the price increase. Let's face it: how much does a dollar and a half increase really affect us? Yearly this adds up to the reader spending roughly \$15.00 more than they would have if not for the increase. I know people who spend \$15.00 on lunch. Every day a punk kid spends \$3 on a 7" they will probably never listen to. Every day some hardcore kid buys an embroidered (insert Victory Records band name here) patch for 4 bucks, and for what? What do they get out of it? At least with *PP* you can come away knowing something you didn't know yesterday, which to me is worth a buck fifty any day. People will continue to read *Punk Planet* provided that you don't lose sight of what makes the zine great. From what I have garnered in the past, I know you'll do the right thing.

Jason Nakleh
Most Precious Ink
Brooklyn, New York

Dan Sinker,

I read your introduction to *Punk Planet* #28 where you told us that you were going to raise the price. At first I was like, "Oh that's cool that they're letting us know." But then I realized that really it was fucked.

Sure, you told us before you did it, but you never asked us, the people that buy *Punk Planet*, what we thought about.

Well I'll tell you what I think: I think you're a money-hungry sellout that wouldn't know real punk if it came up and bit him on

the ass. Real punks don't care if they're losing money. Real punks aren't out to make any. Real punks don't use barcodes or write about not punk bands like the Get Up Kids.

From all the real punks, fuck you and fuck your "magazine."

Mike Deerbrook

Toronto, Canada

Dan Sinker and Punk Planet.

I think it is great you are raising the price of *Punk Planet*. The price hike is good for two reasons. First, it will decrease the amount of consumer goods people buy. Either, *Punk Planet* will sell less magazines or people will continue to buy *Punk Planet* and buy less of something else. Second, the new zine is enviro-friendly. This is a bonus for us green radicals.

On a related note. Prices in punk are too low. Yes, you read that right. I am sick of the pricing system in punk rock. It causes us to consume more product than we would otherwise and the people that make the products are usually barely covering their costs of production. Not to mention getting some money for their efforts.

Thank you *Punk Planet*. I hope this spreads.

Shaun Godwin

Livonia, MI

Punk Planet & Dan Sinker

I understand your arguments about raising the price of *Punk Planet*. I guess it's just something you had to do. But I'll tell you that something I have to do is not buy your zine anymore. The price increase is the last straw that started with color covers and barcodes and all the other bullshit you've pulled on your readers over the last year. I like the writing in the zine and it's really gotten a lot better since you started, but you have to draw a line somewhere and I draw it here.

Good luck in the future, I won't be there.

Glenn

Dallas, TX

Punk Planet

At first, I was like "Wow, \$3.50, that's steep." But then again, I would pay \$3.50 for a punk rock 7", I would pay 6 or 7 bucks for a punk CD, so why wouldn't I pay \$3.50 for a punk zine? And a good one at that! Kids will complain, but what else is new? I don't

think an extra buck fifty every two months is going to set people back. And it's good to see that you all are going to start using recycled paper—I'm way into it. Punks looking out for the trees.

Thanks for giving a fuck.

Matt Welch

Tampa, FL

More about religion & punk

Dear Punk Planet,

This letter is a response to the "One With God, One With Punk" letter that appeared in issue #27. I can't speak on behalf of your friends who are so opposed to religion, but I can tell you why I have a problem with it. I will mainly focus on Christianity because that is the one that I am most familiar with.

First of all, Christianity like most religions, is a complete dictatorship. All of your opinions must be in accordance with "the word of god" even if "the word of god" is completely absurd and makes absolutely no sense at all. There's no room for your brain to wander and explore other possibilities. For instance, you can't say (or even think) "Hey, that evolution theory makes a lot of sense. Maybe we really did evolve from monkeys." And you can't say, "Hey, what if the human race was created in a test tube by aliens as an experiment?" Religion is the complete opposite of individuality, open-mindedness and independent thought. Religion means conformity, convention and censorship. Religion doesn't require you to think or ask questions it only requires blind obedience. Religion is a dictatorship and God is the dictator.

I have a question for all you religious people out there. How do you know that you are worshipping the "right" god? How do you know that you picked the "right" religion? For example, if you're a Christian, how do you know that the Christian god is the "true" god? Maybe the Buddhist god is the "real" god. Maybe the Muslim god is the "real" god. Maybe the gods of Greek mythology are the "true" gods. Religious people often think that their religion is the "truth" and that every other religion is "false." In other words, they believe that all other religions are man-made. THIS IS INSANE! They have no trouble accepting the idea that all other religions were dreamt up by human

minds, yet they dare not even consider the possibility that their own religion was created by humans. In fact, a person's religious faith is often determined by chance. If a person is Christian, it's usually because they just happened to be raised by Christian parents. If a person is Muslim, it's usually because they were raised by Muslims, etc... Yet religious people all over the world are arrogant enough to strut around claiming that they alone possess the "absolute truth" and anyone who belongs to a different religious faith (or no faith at all) is "lost" and needs to be "saved" or they will burn in hell. They have no proof to back up their claims. The only reason they believe in the things they do is because mommy and daddy said so. Well, they also told you there was a Santa Claus.

In your letter, you talk about prejudice and intolerance. Well, take a look at Christianity! Christianity is completely sexist and homophobic. The bible says that god placed women under the authority of man and that a good Christian wife is a wife who is submissive and obedient to her husband. When you point this out to Christians, many will say, "Yeah, but in this other part of the Bible over here it says that a man should love and respect his wife." SO WHAT! That doesn't excuse it! That doesn't make it OK! That simply shows that the Bible contradicts itself and that whoever wrote the Bible has shit for brains. You can't look down upon someone as subhuman and a slave and at the same time love and respect them. What if the Bible said that god placed black people under the authority of white people and that black people should be submissive and obedient to white people but then in other parts of the Bible it said that white people should love and respect black people? Would that excuse what was said before? Many Christians are two-faced because the religion itself is two-faced.

The Bible also says that homosexuality is an "abomination" punishable by death. Not such a far leap from Nazis executing homosexuals in the concentration camps, eh? The bible also says that it's a terrible crime against humanity for two people who just happen to belong to two different races to have sex with each other. OH NO! We can't let that happen! Christianity is a bunch of racist, sexist, homophobic bullshit!

In your letter, you said "How is this hurting you? Why do you care? NO ONE IS FORCING THESE BELIEFS DOWN YER

THROAT!!! WHAT??!! What fucking planet are you living on? We're approaching the year 2000, I think by now it is, or at least should be, common knowledge that religious people DO force their beliefs down other people's throats! Look at a history book or a newspaper and you'll see examples of it. Remember the Crusades? The Inquisition? Ronald Reagan and the "Moral Majority?" The countless wars? And what about the Catholic Fascist movement in Croatia during the 1940s? They forcibly converted 240,000 Serbs and decapitated 750,000 Serbs in concentration camps where monks and priests worked as executioners. And what about all of the children who are born into religious families? They are force-fed religious garbage before they can even comprehend what it means. They never had a chance to form their own opinions. Saying that religious people don't force their beliefs down people's throats is like saying that politicians are honest, caring individuals who aren't concerned with money, power or status. It's too obvious to deny.

There are as many contradictions in the Bible as there are stars in the sky! The biggest one is god himself. If the god described in the Bible really existed, I would not even want to live! Nobody else would either. The god described in the Bible is a blood-thirsty lunatic. He kills people left and right throughout the Bible (always for ridiculous reasons); he kills indiscriminately; he wipes people out with plagues, floods; he "blessed" people by providing them with slaves; he orders people to kill other people; he helps people kill each other in wars. In fact, at one point in the bible, someone, I believe it was Moses, actually had to plead with god and beg him to act more humane! This supreme being with his infinite wisdom can't even live up to his own moral standards yet he expects us puny mortals to? This character called god is a hypocrite and a liar, yet he expects me to bow before him? Fuck him. He acts like a spoiled brat. He thinks that because he created us, he can do as he pleases with us. He has no value for human life. He treats us like objects. He can go fuck himself. If there really is a god out there who is omnipotent, fair and just then why is there so much pain and suffering in the world? If you were omnipotent you could just make it impossible for people to hurt each other. You could erase all hate and greed and war just by thinking it. But your so-called Holy

Father doesn't try and stop any one of these things. Why is that?

Like a lot of religious scum these days, you whimper and whine as if religious people are the oppressed minority and us big, bad atheists, non-believers and other "lost souls" just bully you around. Well boofucking-hoo! Think about this: How many religions are there on the TV and radio spewing out their regressive, backwards, caveman beliefs? Now ask yourself how many anti-religious sentiments do you hear on the TV and radio? Now think of all the people throughout history up until the present day who have suffered persecution and ridicule because they didn't want to bow down to any god. Think about all of the people who have been tortured and killed in the name of god not because they committed a horrible crime but simply because they were smart enough to see "religion" for what it really is. So forgive me if I don't seem sympathetic to bible-thumping bigots who tell a sob story of persecution and intolerance. You're finally getting a taste of your own medicine. For far too long, us "non-believers" have been put on trial and used as a scapegoat. Now it's our turn to ask the questions. It's our turn to place your beliefs on trial. The burden of proof is on you, not us. We actually have facts and common sense to back up what we say. What do you have to back up your claims? There are no facts or common sense to back up your outrageous claims—only superstition and tradition.

Religion doesn't make anyone a better person. It only transforms people into rabid dogs and it clouds the mind. Religion prevents humanity from reaching its full potential. Religion is pointless, idiotic, ridiculous, sick and can be very dangerous. The more people that reject religion, the closer we are to a sane, civilized society (for anyone who is interested in this topic, a good book to read is *Holy Daze* by Chester Dolan. Information is power).

Jeremy

Shawano, WI

More like Indie Rock Planet

Punk Planet.

I have been an avid reader of your magazine for awhile now, and for the most part I am pleased with the quality and content. However, there is one thing that continues to

bother me.

In the newest issue you interviewed the Get Up Kids, and in past issues you interviewed bands like the Promise Ring, Karate, and even Elliot Smith. My question to you is: what makes these bands punk? In my opinion they are indie rock bands. The only similarity I could come up with between those bands and punk bands is that the music is independently released. If that qualifies a band as punk in the eyes of your publication then you might as well interview bands like Pavement as well, or even one of the many jazz musicians that release their music independently.

I realize many people, myself included, don't limit themselves to strictly punk music, but when I buy a zine called Punk Planet, I expect to read about punk bands and punk issues. The same is true if I bought an issue of Transworld Skateboarding, I would expect to read about skateboarding and skateboarding topics.

Bands like the Promise Ring and the Get Up Kids play pop music, it's as simple as that. It has nothing to do with punk. Perhaps you should create a second publication called Indie/Emo Planet so people like myself don't have to flip past a Get Up Kids interview after reading a Kevin Seconds interview.

Thanks

J. Hays
Long Valley, NJ

J-

Punk Planet has changed a lot in the four and a half years that we've been publishing but one thing that hasn't is my dogged belief that punk isn't an easily-definable musical style.

I've always made it a point to include a wide range of sounds and ideas in the magazine. I'm glad you don't like all the bands in Punk Planet—or even think that they're all "punk." To me, that means that we're doing something right.

Yours,

Dan

WRITE PUNK PLANET!

Surely you can't agree with everything we print within these pages. Or maybe you do. Either way, let us know!

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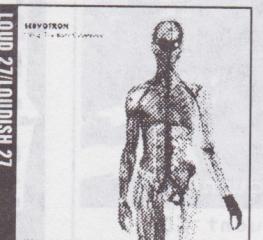
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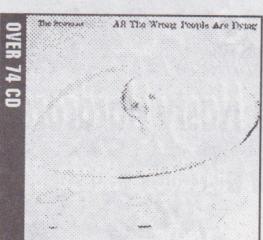
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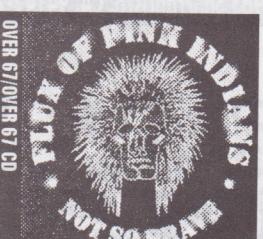
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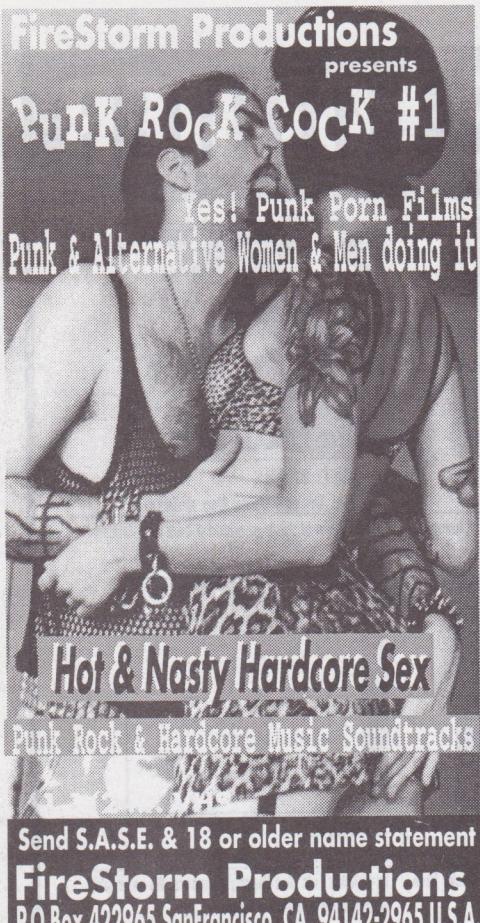
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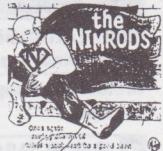
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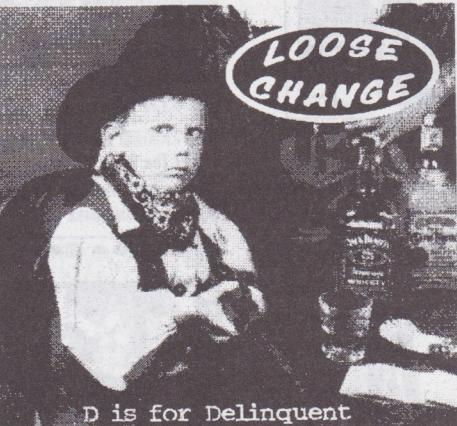
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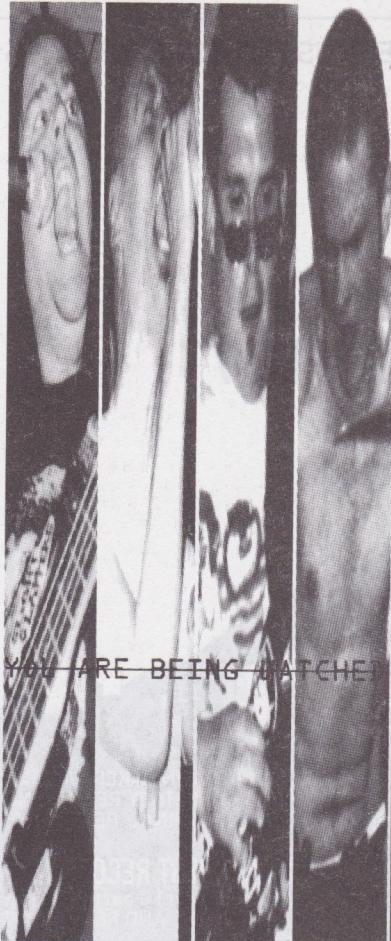


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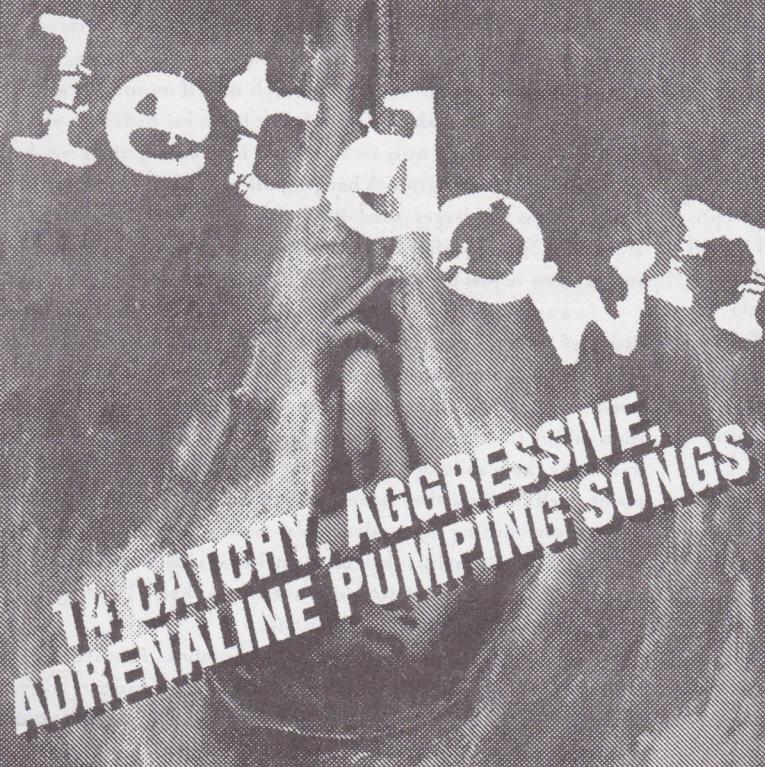


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*banana!
power.
Patti
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Part One: The Robbery

The first time my old apartment got broken into was during my first year of college. It wasn't so much of an apartment as it was a

boarding house where students rented their own rooms and we all shared obvious things like the kitchen and the bathroom. The floors were lined with a dirt-colored linoleum that had warped and bubbled over the years, and my whole room was on a definite slant. Jutting out of the wall across from my single bed was a rather large sink and faucet, which was odd and convenient at the same time. The walls themselves were a shiny-smooth, yellowish white—i.e. ugly.

Thankfully, there was and is always a never-ending supply of pictures and postcards for the transient student types who are too cheap and lazy to buy paint. Read: me.

One of my favorite posters from my teenage years was an awesome 4 by 5 black and white jobber of Morrissey—my main crooner crush for a good many years. That exceptional piece of stalker-like paraphernalia graced the wall space from the head of my bed right on up to the ceiling. The first thing to greet me after a long day of school and work when I opened my bedroom door would be the image of Morrissey in a fuzzy sweater—perfectly captured with that sly smile which melted the hearts of millions. That static object of affection was usually a pleasing sight to come home to. Then again, there's always some boogernugget out there to throw fuck to the wind. And your snotrag defense can't be manning the frontlines 24-7. So it's gonna suck to be you... sometimes.

I used to live, work, and go to school all on the same street. This was during my first two years of college. I think that living in such close proximity to everything I needed steered me toward this hermitous lifestyle which I've managed to cultivate quite nicely over the years. It also allowed me to break up my days with many intermittent breathers which consisted of me dashing home from school so as to avoid any social contact with my peers. Not like the potentiality of that was in abundance I suppose. Art school + Toronto = good luck, yer gonna need it.

It was on one of these little inbetweener breaks that I came home to a full-on punch in the face. Of course, I wasn't literally smacked in the noggin, but I think I actually would have preferred that to what had just occurred at my temporary abode. After one of my afternoon classes, I had returned home to find our front door ajar. Very odd for that to be, considering we never left our bedroom doors unlocked, let alone have our front door wide open for just anybody. Let us mark this as the 'Oh Shit Signifier #1', shall we? And as I pushed that door open without having had to dig around in my bag for house keys, I knew something was horribly wrong. My stomach dropped out, my heart skipped a beat, and I probably even pinched myself for the fun of it. Not really, but what I'm getting at here is that sick feeling of complete and utter dread. It's like you can see the shit hurtling toward you in slow-mo; like being forced to chew on anchovies in one cheek and a Big Turk bar in the other. Tasty.

I entered what appeared to be a dead empty house in terms of my roommates being around. Walking through the front foyer, I looked up the long and straight staircase and felt myself mouth the words "Noooo...", barely making a sound. For it was my bedroom at the top of those stairs and the only view I should have been getting was a closed door with an ugly lock hanging off to the side. Instead, all I could see was that larger-than-life image of The Mozzer staring down at me (Oh Shit Signifier No.2) smirking, as if to say "Welcome home, sucker. You've just been robbed."

In a zombie-like state, I wandered through the house in sheer disbelief, wishing that our ransacked bedrooms had been caused by a blown open shutter, or by an army of our wall-dwelling rodent friends. Somehow I found myself on the phone calling the cops, and then calling them again a few minutes later to find out what the hell was taking them so long. Not like they could do much for me at that point. Well, not like they've done that much for me ever yada yada (aside from curbing my reckless pedal-pushin' ways, [see Top Five section]). But formalities will be formalities, if only to be the most minuscule percentage on someone's statistics chart. The sugarless icing on top of the fruitcake, if you will.

My landlady lost some jewelry and a boombox. That sentence almost sounds like an oxymoron because we tend to associate the word "boombox" with youth, and the term "landlady" with old and crotchety. But Jocelyn, my landlady at the time, was only a few years older than

IS DPP90

myself, and fairly easygoing. The two Korean sisters, who were sharing the biggest bedroom, also lost a few pieces of irreplaceable jewelry, which is the worst—when something so special has been taken from you and your chances of getting it back are pretty much next to none.

Our other roommate, Rosa, was at the opposite end of the spectrum who lost something of a much more fluid nature. Try \$800 in cold hard cash that she was planning on bringing to school the next day to pay off her tuition fees. Even with our lousy Canadian dollar, that's a small fortune for anybody. Rosa was forced to move back home shortly thereafter because she couldn't afford to raise the money for tuition again and pay rent on her closet of a room. Yeah, it's stupid to leave such a large wad of cash at home unattended, and yeah, insurance companies will laugh at such incidents, but I still felt badly for her. Rosa clearly did not deserve this. None of us did.

I was undoubtedly the joke hit out of the whole burglary. I owned no precious trinkets to hock, what little money I had to my name was in the bank, and I didn't even own a CD player until later in college. They surely did not want my crappy turntable I've had since grade school. Nor did they care for my first guitar which boasted the fine quality and vibrant sound that could only be born out of the sweet Yamaha guitar-making tradition. Heh heh. They did take my 'World Famous' knapsack to put everyone else's goods into, as well as an automatic camera that I had borrowed from my older sis. Small beans of no sentimental value, really.

The thing that upset me the most was that horrible feeling of your private space having been violated. And consequently, we were extensions of that. We had been violated. We had been made fools out of and there was not a damn thing we could do about it. It's the same old thoughts that leap out when undue shit happens to fly your way. It's not fair. Why me? What have I done to deserve this? Why Do Bad Things Happen to Good People? How many people have bought that book in search of answers that aren't a mere paperback away? Feh.

This incident was certainly not the end of the world. Life would go on quasi-as usual. The paranoia and fear of lurkers in my neighborhood would dissipate with time. My skin became a little thicker and my faith in society dropped another notch or two, but we dealt with our cruddy hand and kept on truckin'. Not to say that 'putting up with the bullshit' is acceptable, not at all. Nor did I write this column as some sort of anti-stealing rant. Good lord. I'd be the world's

biggest hypocrite if it were all so clear cut and dry. But your standard B & E's just suck ass. Not cool, nope! It could be worse, oh yes. How do you deal when you wake up to the sounds of a stranger in your apartment? Find out in the next issue of Punk Planet how this courageous (hyuk) columnist battles one sorry fucker with grace, eloquence, reams of profanity, and chicken breast. Coming to newsstands near you...

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So many times have I gotten into a car, headed for the highway, and driven away. Usually I knew where I was going, but that didn't mean I had

anywhere to go. I'd spend weeks looking over the same maps, planning out the journey a hundred times, not out of any need for a tight itinerary, but so I could make the trip a hundred times over in my mind before I finally left.

It never really mattered where I was going. Once it was the East Coast, twice I headed West, I'd been through the Midwest more times than I could count, and once to the Southwest. It didn't matter where I ended up—the only important thing was that I go. This went on for years, and maybe it still does. I didn't do it so much to run away from anything as I did it just to be alone. It's not that I never felt lonely, but I never chose to be alone unless I got in the car and drove away. I always felt less lonely when I traveled by myself than I did in my regular surroundings, even though I was definitely much more on my own.

For a long time I didn't go anywhere anymore. I had moved to a new city and was getting comfortable there. I had made new friends, I liked the house I lived in, and I had found a couple of jobs to help me

piece together the rent. My life was pretty comfortable, and I hadn't really wanted to leave in a long time. But I still kind of missed it. I missed the feeling of the wind roaring against the open window and the road bumping against the tires as I rushed from one spot to another. I missed being restless. I missed not having enough time to check out a city or get to know anyone before I settled back behind the wheel and drew the seat belt into its comfortable spot across my chest. It wasn't so much the travel itself, but more the adrenaline, the need to get out of town that I missed.

Right about this time, my mom called me up and invited me to come to England with her to visit my grandmother for about a week. Free plane tickets, a week in the country with my family, and a chance to travel through England again. I decided to go, and planned two more weeks of traveling on my own afterwards.

After a week with my family in a cottage they rented near Marlborough, and a few days with my sister visiting friends in Bath, I set off on my own. I walked out of Bath to the highway that lead to Bristol, set down my backpack and stuck out my thumb. I had never hitchhiked before, but before I really had time to consider the etiquette of it, a young guy on his way home from work stopped to give me a lift. It all seemed so easy and so unadventurous. Most of the rest of my trip was the same way—I never waited long hitchhiking. I didn't really experience any problems at all, and I made a comfortable pace north as far as Edinburgh and south to London two weeks after I had left.

It's not that it wasn't memorable; actually, I had an incredible time. I walked through Bristol alone in the rain, feeling sort of comfortably lost and glad to have the city to explore on my own. I stayed with some squatters in Oxford who were protesting a road the city wanted to build, and a bunch of us went to the local pub to watch the World Cup Final. I had a week alone to sightsee in York and Edinburgh, and just when I was getting bored of my own company, I met up with my friends in Newcastle for a weekend of punk rock soccer and late night conversations. And after a brief stop in Leeds for a night with incredibly hospitable strangers, I hitched to London to stay with my sister for a few days of running around town to see museums and art galleries before flying home.

It was a lot to do in a short amount of time, but I'm glad I fit so much into those two weeks. I met some really inspiring people while I was there, and I enjoyed being on my own as well. But when I flew home I had a nagging feeling that I had missed something. I felt a little disoriented, but it was different than the usual unsettling realization that the vacation is over and it's time to go home. Rather than feeling like the journey couldn't possibly be over, I felt like it hadn't even begun.

So many times I had gone speeding across the country in a desperate hurry to get away, and to have the isolation of the road comfort me, that any trip without that urgency didn't feel right. Even though I had a terrific time in England, I couldn't just have a nice vacation without feeling like I was missing out. I've been having this experience of deadened sensation pretty frequently lately. At first it was really frustrating—nothing seemed authentic anymore, just a watered down version of the real thing. I started to worry that I was getting really boring and lifeless, and that nothing would feel exciting in the same way again. Now I realize that a lot of the thrill I had come to

expect was more of a desperate panic disguised as excitement. Getting in the car and isolating myself from the rest of my life was my escape when I felt like life was beyond my control. The road was such a nowhere place—it existed only between other places—that when I was by myself traveling across the country, I felt removed from everything, and I associated that desperate sense of escape with the simple fun of being on the road. Now that I know why it's gone, I don't miss it very much anymore.



This is a pivotal time in the political arena. The two human rights issues that I feel most strongly about and the ones I know the

most about are the situations in Colombia and East Timor—both of which I've written about in this column. To reiterate the basics: Colombia is in the throes of a brutal dirty war involving the military, paramilitary groups, and guerrillas. Human rights violations on the part of all three parties have been and continue to be horrendous, giving Colombia the dubious honor of having been considered the most violent country in the world for a decade. In 1975 East Timor was invaded by Indonesia. Since then 200,000 Timorese—or a third of their population—have been wiped out.

In the past few months there have been hopeful developments in both places. The new president of Colombia has made some encouraging steps toward promoting peace talks with the guerrillas. He has made this the number one priority of his government. He talked about demilitarizing an area in the southeast of Colombia in order to facilitate meetings with the guerrillas. Our wonderful government, now in the process of deciding how much aid it is going to give to Latin American countries for the "war on drugs," has threatened to withhold aid to Colombia if President Pastrana demilitarizes this zone.

Naturally, this aid for the war on drugs is a sham. Colombia would receive around \$220 million, 80 percent of which is targeted for the military. In other words, it would be safe to say that most of the money would go toward the civil war, not the war on drugs. In contrast, 75 percent of the money going to Peru, which is receiving a similar amount as Colombia, would be used to develop alternative programs for farmers to encourage them to not grow drug crops. Although the nature of the aid is a farce, it is obvious that Pastrana is heavily reliant on this money (Colombia is the largest recipient of US foreign aid in this hemisphere) so threatening to withhold it is a clear message that the US doesn't want to see peace in Colombia for whatever reason. But Pastrana seems—at least superficially—determined to go ahead. Government officials have already met with leaders of the National Liberation Army (ELN), the second largest guerrilla group in the country. Although the meeting didn't resolve any

thing, it was a phenomenally important step, one that shows a teensy ray of hope for the future.

Coincidentally enough, Indonesia's leadership has also changed hands. As many of you have probably already heard due to widespread coverage of the riots and chaos in Indonesia, former President Suharto resigned in May. The repression in Indonesia and East Timor still continues but there are signs that things are changing. President Habibie, Indonesia's new leader, offered the East Timorese autonomy. Although this proposal had some ridiculous stipulations and was rejected in favor of independence, it was nevertheless an unprecedented attempt at negotiating with the East Timorese. In June there was a peaceful protest in Dili, the capital of East Timor, of more than 10,000 people. Also in June East Timorese students participated in the first openly-held mass protest of Timorese in Jakarta, Indonesia. Two months later two resistance leaders were allowed to speak at a demonstration from the balcony of Cipinang prison where they are being held. For the first time ever, Indonesian activists and intellectuals spoke out in an organized forum in Dili against the illegal occupation of East Timor and supported independence.

I almost cried with joy when I read about all these changes. While there are some serious problems in the world of infringements of personal freedom, the violation of the right to live is the most grave—one that I can't imagine having to endure. Sure, I get pissed off when people tell me what to do, what I can't say, or how to look, but by no means has my life ever been threatened in the way that the lives of Colombians and East Timorese have.

Some people fight for the right to burn the flag, others fight for the right to be alive. I am not saying that the first isn't an important battle—it is. But while we are at this elevated level in our struggle against the establishment, there are so many people out there that could only dream of being in such a position. There are millions of people in the world that can't even begin to think about the right to the pursuit of happiness because they have to fight to maintain their very existence. Can you imagine having to decide whether or not to join a resistance movement or face probable death at the hands of the military? Or saying, "I've already lost my family. I have nothing to lose by joining the guerrillas but everything to gain if we win?" I certainly can't.

There are people dying for the right to live while others sit at home doing their nails or fretting over their record collections. Thought I can't understand not caring at all, I can understand not getting involved. There are so many problems in the world that it can seem overwhelming and make you feel powerless. Many people are in positions where they don't have the resources or time to help. It also makes sense that everybody contributes only what they feel the most personally comfortable and satisfied with.

For many years I was only interested in making myself happy and trying to have a good life. Now I'm at a point where I wouldn't consider my life fulfilling unless I was doing something to help others. I live in a country where I can speak my mind with relatively little fear of reprisal. It is my duty to use this privilege to give voice to others who don't have the same. I do not have to make the choice between fighting on my feet or dying on my knees and I can't live with myself not moving a muscle to help those that are confronted with this daily.

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While on tour this spring in Europe I really got to know my friend Thomas from Berlin pretty well since we both were sitting behind the merchandise table together often. We had a lot of thought-provoking conversations in the corners of squats and floors of clubs. One idea that struck me with particular force was his theory that the US is separate from a lot of the world in that it hasn't had to endure an internal conflict or war on its own soil for over a century. This really got me thinking.

How would the US be different if there had been serious conflicts within our borders? Would we all still be lazy consumers with cars that watch TV all the time and concern ourselves only with how much money we can make? How many of us every had to deal with serious military repression? Or even unstable economies? Or living in fear of being displaced from our homes?

I can't fathom living in a war-torn country. I can't imagine trying to suppress memories of horror and fear. Nothing gets me more emotional than hearing about people giving up their lives to fight for their freedom but it is something that never has happened—and never will—to me. Our way of living is so alien to most people in the world because it is inherently selfish. There is no background of terror so we're all just looking out for No. 1 while others have had to unite and help each other in order to survive. I feel more and more lucky every day that I have the opportunities and freedoms that I have had. My family were all living in Korea during the Korean war and I can see the effects it has had on them. I don't necessarily mean just how it traumatized them but also how hard they've worked to forget about it and have decent lives in the States. Even though I've lived with my family for most of my life, I still can't imagine going through what they have: a civil war; growing up in a severely conservative, repressive society; moving to another country where they barely speak the language so their kids wouldn't have to grow up in a place that is still fucked up to this day. Although I don't agree with a lot they say or their regressions into conservative modes of thought, there is still something markedly different about them that separates them from your average American adult. I respect them for the choices and sacrifices they've made and the hardships they've endured. My greatest wish is that no one in the world will ever again have to struggle to survive.

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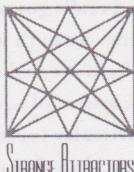
In this issue you should find my severely truncated South America tour diary. I'm thinking about publishing a book of photos and all of my journals of this tour, the tour in Europe, and other miscellaneous travels. Anyone want to buy me a computer and scanner?

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Please write! If you want to know more about Colombia or East Timor or learn about Nike's hideous labor practices or Equal Exchange's fairly traded coffees, send me two stamps (each topic) if you're from the US or a long-winded personal letter if you live elsewhere. From January '99 to an undetermined date I will most likely be in South America again, so please be patient—it will take me a long time to respond.

kimbae@hotmail.com or PO Box 2110, Champaign, IL 61825
2110 USA

DARREN CAHR



STRANGE ATTRACTORS

WASHINGTON—Today, in an unexpected turn of events, the United States Government collapsed in the wake of falling ratings and viewer boredom.

"No one really cares anymore," said Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott, dressed immaculately in a long, strapless red dress from Versace and low-slung Salvatore Ferragamo pumps. "We couldn't even get a good head of steam up from the religious wackos anymore. Things got boring. It's a damn shame."

Similar sentiments were expressed across the political aisle. Senator Fritz Holling, a longtime legislator from South Carolina, noted that he hadn't received more than 10 calls in the past month, two of which were wrong numbers and the rest asking if he had Prince Albert in a can. "The worst part of it was that we were so bored that we actually fell for it six separate times," he said. "These are dark days, indeed."

One senator who remembers better days, Robert Byrd, Jr. of West Virginia, hearkens back to a better time. "I remember when people gave a shit," said Senator Byrd, slicking his hair back with lard. "Today, kids just listen to that damn rock music, they don't know how hard I've struggled over the years to pave the great state of West Virginia from end to end. I've almost done it, and now we're all going home."

Admittedly, there were some who saw this coming. Former Cabinet member Mike Espy, prior to his arraignment on bribery charges, screamed, "You're all going down, all of you, you goddamn motherfuckers!" at some of his colleagues. This was, however, dismissed as frustration, and not as the cries of a Cassandra.

Another ignored prophet turned out to be former California governor Jerry Brown, currently Mayor of Oakland, California. A 1989 interview with the Governor, recently discovered in the backseat of a 1993 Camaro in Fresno, reveals a certain vision about this bleak future:

TRANSCRIPT (p.2)

Q.

A. I don't want to answer that question

Q.

A. No, that one either. She's none of your business. Go ask her. Ask her about the invest—

Q.

A. Well, all right. I'll tell you. I've become increasingly worried.

Q.

A. No, it isn't like that I—

Q.

A. Well, yes. People are getting bored. Government is no longer as amusing as it was when, say, it was shocking that Jimmy Carter felt lust in his heart. Now, everything is in the open, everything from that Gary Hart stuff to the accusations against—

Q.

A. No, you're right. I probably shouldn't get into that. What are you doing tonight, by the way?

Q

A. No, that wasn't a proposition, just a question.

Q.

A. Well, I think the logical place we'll be in, 10 years down the road, is a place where nothing is surprising, nothing is shocking, no one trusts anyone, and people figure that they may as well just focus on fixing their own problems.

Q.

A. Right. I don't think that we can turn our backs. My problems are, to a certain extent, your problems.

Q.

A. No, I didn't mean that literally.

Q.

A. No, that wasn't a threat. I mean that if there are structural inequalities in society, we need to work together to fix—

Q.

A. Of course it won't ever work. People are idiots.

Q.

A. And that's why I'm done with politics. Finished. You can quote me on that.

Q.

A. Well, OK. I'm lying. But you see, that's the problem. If you can't trust me, who can you trust?

(TRANSCRIPT ENDS)

Others are not so sanguine about the prospect for renewed interest in government. Former President Bill Clinton, recuperating in California from his recent surgery with his new wife, Oprah Winfrey, said that, "This country is now past the point of no return. It has sunk to a level where even the slime of political operatives can't bring themselves to stand." Winfrey agreed. "I think everyone sucks," she said, eating a large cheeseburger with fries on her treadmill. "I say kill 'em all."

Hillary Rodham, the former Mrs. Clinton, had no comment.

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Dormancy.

It has taken me this long to realize that writing is an act of courage, but I still haven't figured out where my bravery has

gone. I have a few ideas, or rather, excuses, as to why my ability to observe and document the world seems to have drifted into hibernation. I started keeping a journal about seven years ago, and it has gone in and out of style throughout this period. Frankly, this is the writing that is most important to me, as it is the most regular, and keeps me in practice.

In the past 12 months my typing skills have improved considerably. I type faster and more accurately than I ever did, even though I still don't type "correctly." Conversely, my handwriting has taken a severe nose dive. I've made a couple of journal entries this month and noticed how much trouble I have writing as legibly as I once did. I start to wonder if my hands are just trembling with excitement. The nib of the pen skims across the paper dizzily, turning letters into scribbles and snakes, leaving out vowels, falling drunkenly out of the margin.

I didn't used to sit in front of multiple monitors every day at work. I didn't used to own a computer. I used to write letters each week and write in my journal every day. It's not a bad thing that I now use a keyboard as my primary tool; earning \$25 an hour is preferable to \$25 a day, especially since I like living in the City and having a job where I don't have to deal with "customers" in any way.

But I know that something is missing. I think that neglecting writing is chipping away at me. This has been going on for almost a year now. I think the worst part about it is that while I have written columns for this magazine and posted things on my Website, I haven't done any writing for me. Writing is my main creative outlet; without it I feel somewhat barren. For some people it's music, for some it's art, for some it's cooking or theater or photography. At this point all I can do to make writing a daily part of my life again is to make a promise to myself and pretend I am in school. Give myself exercises to complete, and make myself more conscientious of how I use my personal time. Writing takes so much more effort when you are working 12 or 14 hour days, when your personal time becomes slender, and when there are more people you want to share it with.

Resolutions.

I don't quite know what to make of 1998 just yet. For the first two months, it rained almost every day. I have had three jobs in the past 12 months, each twice as good as the last. I haven't done much traveling at all, unlike last summer when I was alone in Europe again. This year I fell in love and it was pretty easy. This year I found what resembles a career path—Web Monkey and Fledgling Geek. I grew my hair long enough to put braids in it, then I cut it off again and dyed it blue, then blonde, then red. I moved to San Francisco and my rent more than doubled (it was cheap to begin with in Berkeley, of course). I found out that weeks and months go by faster when you work a lot and spend less time watching TV.

In 1998, I had health insurance through my job for the first time, but I never took advantage of it because I worked at companies with high turnover, meaning you had to be employed there three months or more in order to qualify (whack), and by the time I qualified I had come to the decision to not be a receptionist anymore. Unfortunately, I am now in an even worse position of freelancer, meaning I get no benefits or insurance, but a fat paycheck, which of course I have to figure out my own taxes on, quarterly. I am procrastinating like mad. Getting a CPA just seems so weird to me, as I have been filling out my 1040EZ myself since I was 16.

In 1998 I stopped writing with pens, and stopped writing letters faithfully, and made no progress on the next issue of my fanzine. Who knows if that will happen in 1999, either. The best I have done this

year is a Website that changes less and less as I fill my weeks with work-related geeking.

Next year I want it to be different. I always say that. I want to get a car and drive for half a day in any direction. I want to write stories and essays and fragments and not be scared to show them to myself. I mainly want to move forward and learn stuff. I'll officially be in my late 20s. Still no degree. Wonder how that happened.

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PO Box 989 Berkeley CA 94701. www.jane.org. jane@jane.org. Cheers.



Brave New World

I know this might sound crazy, but these are the things that happen in my life: I was offered a job in India a few

months ago and I accepted. I sublet my apartment, booked my ticket, and all but said goodbye to the Western world. I was excited by, but worse yet, attached to the idea of leaving the country when, all of the sudden, I get an e-mail that says, "Oops. We can't afford to do this after all." I went from feeling optimistic and enthusiastic about a new life to feeling dejected and fucked with.

The average person would probably have licked his wounds before reestablishing the life he'd mentally laid to waste. But me? Well, my bags were packed and my ego was bruised and I was going somewhere, goddamn it. To the surprise of most everyone, I picked Chicago.

I don't want to dwell on this for too long because, so far, I haven't seen any dramatic change in my lifestyle. I'm still a bit of a hermit and besides the occasional sandwich at Jinx or loitering by the water cooler at the Empty Bottle, I haven't really done all that much to warrant an essay about my life here. I do, however, want to use this space to do something that I rarely ever use this column to do—to thank the handful of friends who have received me into their city with open arms. They've taught me a lesson in empathy we could all use: Moving is a test of self-esteem that these people are kindly helping me through. You know who you are.

Art vs. Art

The night before moving, I ran into an old friend at my favorite East Village coffee shop. He used to live across the street from me in a jam-packed studio apartment on East Tenth Street where we'd sit around and listen to Palace records for what seemed like hours. After being stuck for conversation, I mentioned something about Friends, the overwhelmingly popular sitcom that currently runs through syndication and network TV about a dozen times a week out here in Chicago. He slammed his cup of iced coffee and scoffed, "I hate TV. That shit is evil."

I think he expected me to agree, but I challenged him. "Why?"

He said that TV brainwashed society, that its commercials were disgusting, and that its programming was void of useful information.

"Personally," I quibbled, "I don't understand the whole anti-television agenda at all. I mean, it's not like I'm gonna sit here and champion the TV as a great source of inspiration and information or anything, but come on, how is TV really any more mundane than reading a novel or listening to records all day? It seems to me that if you're gonna sit around and brag about not watching TV that you'd better be doing something more productive with your time than learning the lyrics to the new Charles Bronson record or getting lost in someone's pseudo-Kerouac dribble."

He insisted there was a big difference.

My argument: "TV screenwriting and acting is an art—just like playing guitar or writing short stories. Its motive is to create and its result is to entertain and sometimes, by direct or indirect means, to inform. Its commercial aspect and influence is certainly unhealthy and—as with any form of non-underground art—the dollar does control certain aspects of its creation but, hell, if we're gonna throw the baby out with the bathwater then I still think we should probably get rid of that bathtub full of mundane records and fiction books that we all seem to be so damn proud of."

"I still don't agree," he said, sighing. "But lets talk movies! Shit, now that's art!"

Ghost Stories

Let's talk movies.

A scene to remember: Patrick Swayze and Demi Moore are walking home from dinner through a dimly-lit sidestreet, hands holding hands and eyes intertwined. Demi leans over and says, "I love you." Patrick hesitates to respond and finally replies, "Ditto."

Demi immediately pushes herself away and cries, "Why won't you ever just say that you love me too? Why can't you just say that you love me?"

"You know that I love you," Patrick says, somewhat puzzled by the sudden outburst. "Why do you need for me to spell it out for you?"

"Because," Demi says, "sometimes a person needs to be told that they're loved. Sometimes, just knowing is not enough."

At that moment, the couple are attacked by a street thug and, in the fight that ensues, Patrick is killed. He never had the chance to answer her. The moment he could have used to say that he loved her had been wasted. This is called tragedy: Not the fact that he died, but the fact that he died so ignorant of the necessities of his beloved.

Missing The Point

Jean-Michel Basquiat relates an interesting story at the end of his biographical movie. As with Ghost, it expresses a different example of "missing the point."

In this folktale, there was a young prince who was wrongfully imprisoned. He wore a silver crown that intimidated his peers; indeed, many saw the young prince's special status as a threat to their society. As his days passed by in duress, the prince became increasingly frustrated with his situation and started crashing his crown with the iron bars of the cell. His intention was both symbolic and practical. For

one, the prince simply wanted to express these feelings through sound, and secondly, he wanted to call attention to his unjust punishment in hope that someone might hear him and proceed to let him out.

The noise that purged forward by his silver crown against iron was, ironically, a sweet and pleasing sound that found no problem penetrating the consciousness of the outside world. But instead of reacting to the sound in the way that the young prince had hoped for, his society actually swooned to the vibration and prayed that it would never end. They cared neither for the prince nor for his suffering but cared solely for the personal enjoyment they derived from hearing the resonance of sound he'd inadvertently created. The prince, meanwhile, continued to languish in his prison cell—perhaps now, even more than before. The reason: On top of the fact that he yearned to be free, he now became burdened by the idea that the outside world he wanted so badly to become a part of had very little interest in the ideas that he'd been trying to express in comparison to the aesthetics of its creation.

It was only when Basquiat decided that he needed to get out of the art world he'd been ushered into, that he hopelessly realized he had nowhere else to go. He died from a heroin overdose in the early '80s.

Random Notes

Funny, but I actually just got into the whole movie thing a couple of years ago. Before that there was Star Wars—I vaguely remember seeing that in '77 or '78—and The Breakfast Club; I think I always fantasized that everyone would be able to get along as well as the characters in that movie finally did. Besides that, I never particularly cared for the medium.

In 1995, after band practice, a bunch of us went out to a movie theater in New Jersey to hang out. The movie we wanted to see was sold out, so we bought tickets for a Drew Barrymore flick called Boys On The Side instead. I know it sounds corny, but that movie really changed my mind about the genre—not because it was incredibly well-acted or directed, but because it struck a human nerve. In a sense, I could give a shit about Hollywood budgets or box office grosses. The success of this movie, to me, had much more to do with the fact that I felt it.

So what made Boys On The Side so special? I mean, the plot was hardly what I'd call within the framework of realism. They'd have you believe that three women would cross the country together without even really knowing each other. That Whoopi is a black lesbian night-club singer who wanted to make it in Los Angeles because New York had her down. That Mary-Louise is a frustrated waitress who later reveals that she's HIV-positive from a one-night stand with a bartender. And that Drew is a battered girlfriend who skips off with the other two after accidentally killing her drug-dealing boyfriend. Then, as the story develops, Whoopi falls in love with Mary-Louise and Mary-Louise, after confronting her internal homophobia, accepts that she, too, is falling in love with Whoopi. And Drew? She falls in love with the redneck-cop that eventually arrests her, puts her in jail, and fathers her child. Highly unlikely storyline, you say? Of course it is.

What really propelled this movie were the underlying themes involved; certainly the lot of us can relate to the very real-life situations of an awkward crush, escaping dangerous situations, or watching someone you love in the process of dying. And that, I figure, is why we

watch movies in the first place. On one hand, we want to see pieces of ourselves onscreen and we want it to be real enough to know we're not crazy or different from everyone else, but at the same time, we expect these stories to be extraordinary enough for us to flee from the outside world we came in to escape from.

You might think I'm a sap, but when Whoopi sang the Carpenters' "Close To You" to an empty wheelchair after Mary-Louise's funeral, I couldn't help but feel a lump lodged in my throat. Surely all of this movie stuff wouldn't be worth the film it was processed on if I didn't.



Leah Ryan nervous as a...

that there's just no goddamn way you can know anything about them until you take the plunge and move in with them. It's kind of scary. I thought I knew Brian really well. I guess I did, in a way. I knew certain things about him. What's the phrase? I knew that we would "get along," because in the past we had always "gotten along," even under somewhat stressful circumstances. But I'll give you an example. When you know someone casually and you don't live with them and they say something like, "Man, I really gotta do my laundry" or "My apartment is a mess," it doesn't mean much to you. It's not personal. But once you live with someone, you will come to understand the magnitude of statements such as these, and also you will grasp their potential impact upon your life. Similarly compelling are such comments as, "I've just been hanging around the house," and "I'm addicted to television."

I'll cut to the chase. I live in a one-room apartment with a 28-year-old actor who has premature male-pattern baldness and never goes outside.

How, you may ask, did I end up in such a situation? Why, you may also ask, do I stay? Do I have some kind of a sick caretaker complex? Am I secretly in love with this man? If only it were that simple. You see, I am a theater technician by trade which rather strictly dictates the geographical location in which I make my home. That is, unless I get a road show, I'm stuck looking for work in the only city that really has any. Of course, millions of other people desperately need to live here in this very same city for a variety of reasons. To put it technically, the vacancy rate is low. In other words, there aren't any apartments. Even people with good credit and lots of money in the bank have trouble finding a place, because, quite simply, there just aren't any empty apartments to speak of. In a best case scenario, you will pay off brokers, bribe supers, and pay three months' rent ahead for a divey little flat in the middle of gangland. That's if you're lucky.

This issue, I treat you to an excerpt from my novel-in-progress. Humor me, please.

Male Pattern

The funny thing about roommates is

What happened was this: I used to live with my girlfriend. I went on a short two-week tour with a show. I came back a day early. Yada yada yada. You know the rest. It was my apartment, but I couldn't face going back there, knowing that she had been with blah blah blah, you know how it goes.

I gave up my apartment, in a city where there are no apartments. I got a pricey and spartan room at the Y. My credit is lousy and I don't have a lot of money. I was running lights on a show that Brian was in. Did I mention that Brian's an actor? It was an original play, based on Shakespeare's Othello. Of course this was ironic as hell after I got dumped, but you never can predict these things. It was a long play, and I read an Isaac Asimov novel in between light cues, trying not to pay attention to the content. It didn't help that it was a bad play. Other than the fact that it was about a guy who thinks his wife is fucking around on him, it bore little resemblance to anything Shakespeare ever wrote, as far as I could tell. Of course, what the hell do I know? Anyway, I told the stage manager about my situation over the headset.

"Hey, Bill," I said, "You know of any apartments?"

"Naw," said Bill. "Are you kidding?"

"Just asking," I said.

"Your rent go up?"

"Moved out," I said. "Long story."

"Well," He said, "Make sure I still have a way to get in touch with you."

"Just use my beeper," I said, "Like always." Typical goddamn stage manager.

"Ralph," Bill said.

"Yes?" I thought he'd say something like Hang In There, Buddy.

"Standby on light cue 17."

"Standing By," I said.

After the show I told Brian my tale of woe and he offered what then seemed like an ideal solution. His apartment was small, but he was never home, he said. The price was right. I was relieved. I learned something from this. If an actor under 30 with a receding hairline ever again invites me to move in with him, the answer will be a definitive no.

I don't know what he was thinking when he told me he was never home. Maybe on that particular day, the day that he told me he was never home, he hadn't actually been home very much. Maybe he looked at me and thought about that particular day, a day when he'd left the apartment early in the morning stayed out all day and half the night, and the words "I'm never home" had just come out of his mouth. I assure you, though, that nothing could be farther from the truth.

He also overestimated the size of his apartment when he said it was small. If he wanted to be really honest, he should have said it was tiny, or even very small. It was a dark, hallway-ish studio. Brian had a futon at one end. In the middle, there was a weight bench covered with dirty laundry. The kitchen sink was piled high with dishes. I saw a large roach ambling across the greasy gas stove. In the corner near the kitchen there was a single futon, covered with old newspapers and scripts.

Actors fascinate me. You can see them on the way to an audition and they're perfectly coiffed, perfectly groomed. Then you see their apartments and it doesn't match up. Surely, they should have some kind of a skin fungus, living the way they do. Their clothes should be

wrinkled, and they should give off a funky smell. Somehow, they glide out of their respective abodes looking fresh as daisies, without a hair out of place.

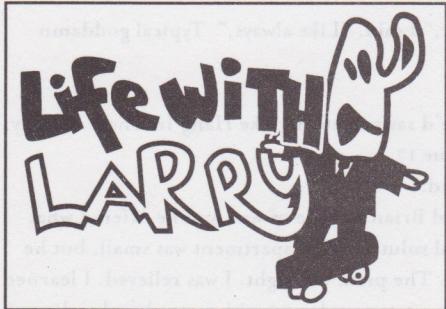
Little did I know that this was the best it would ever get. Because he was in a play, Brian's mood was far better than it would soon become. When the play ended and a few weeks went by without another play in sight, and then a few more weeks without any auditions, things went from bad to worse.

Here's the thing. You take a guy who's really good-looking, like Brian, and there are all kinds of options. He's Love Interest material. He's Leading Man material. A few crow's feet and a half inch off the hairline and suddenly he's Goofy Best Friend material, or worse, Man Number Two-slash-Hotel Clerk material.

...

Violation Fez #6, The Religion Issue, is still available (\$1 or trade: *Violation Fez* c/o Leah Ryan, PO Box 2228, Times Square Station, New York, NY 10108.

I'm still accepting submissions for #7, the School Issue. I hope to really get working on it soon. Remember the rule—short and funny. Poetry is iffy. Self-indulgent rants about how bad the world is are very questionable.



August, die she must
The autumn winds blow
chilly and cold
September, I remember
A love once new has now
grown old
—Simon
and Garfunkel

When I was a little boy in the 1950s, we would sometimes drive from Detroit to Kentucky to visit my Uncle Larry. Nowadays the trip would take five or six hours, but back then, before the Interstate had been put in, we would leave at dawn, spend what seemed like forever winding through the cornfields and weird little towns of Ohio and Indiana, and pull into Louisville long after dark, just in time to go to bed.

We traveled in our '48 Chevy, the only new car our family had ever owned, though by then it was getting pretty long in the tooth. Its old-fashioned roof was so high that anyone under the age of 12 or so could stand up inside, so there was plenty of room for us kids to climb around and fight and make life miserable for our parents. This was in the days before seat belts or child seats, so we couldn't even be strapped down.

Sometimes Dad would entertain us with what he claimed were the world's longest and loudest yawns, which drove Mom batty, since all the kids would try to imitate him. But mostly we would while away the hours with family singalongs.

We had a ratty old songbook that must have contained about a thousand of the cheesiest songs ever known to mankind, exactly the

kind that appeal to children. One of our favorites, especially when going to visit Uncle Larry, was the official state song of Kentucky. It starts out:

"The sun shines bright on my old Kentucky home
'Tis summer, darkies are gay..."

Today, of course, no one in his right mind sings about "darkies," and "gay" has a completely different meaning. But from the 1870s, when Stephen Foster wrote that song and many others that helped launch the American popular music industry, to the 1950s, when children innocently sang words that would be regarded as deeply racist today, a whole new world had been born, even if the attitudes of the old one hung about far longer than they should have.

My grandfather, my father's father, was born in 1870. When he was a boy, there were no cars, no electricity, no telephones. He never went beyond the second grade in school, and made his living working on horse-drawn carriages. Later, around the turn of the century, he helped develop suspension systems for some of the first automobiles. He was on his way to being a rich man, but like many of his generation, lost it all in the Depression of the 1930s.

His father, my father's grandfather, was born in 1832, into a family of illiterate Irish peasants. At the age of 16 he made his way to the United States in time to escape the mass starvation of the potato famine. My father remembers sitting on his knee as a little boy. The lives of my 20th century father and his 19th century grandfather together have spanned 166 years, more than half the life of this country.

And what's my point, you could be forgiven for asking right about now? First of all, it's October, and October is a time for remembering, for trying to make sense and, if you're lucky, poetry and song out of another year as it slips away with a last, glorious burst of melancholy and fleeting beauty.

And the years add up to a life, and our lives add up to history, and, as one of my professors announced in the first words he spoke that semester: "We live in history the way we live in oxygen."

In some languages, "history" and "story" are essentially the same word. In others, like our own, we make a distinction between the two. If I say I'm going to tell you about history, many of you will groan and turn the page; a story, on the other hand, will have most of you hanging about waiting to see what happens next.

But what is the difference? Isn't history just the story that gets told the loudest and longest by the people who have the most power? Isn't that why about 90 percent of "American history" is actually the story of the Europeans who conquered America and transplanted their civilization onto it?

Well, yes, partly. But there's another reason too: For hundreds, even thousands of years before the Europeans came, not all that much happened. That's not to say it was a bad life—by some accounts it was a very good life—but change took place very slowly if at all. Once the Europeans landed, all hell broke loose, and not just from the point of view of the Indians, who saw their culture virtually destroyed and their population reduced to a fraction of what it had been.

Things got exciting, too, though, and not only in bad ways. Less than a hundred years after the last Indian tribes had been conquered,

men were walking on the moon. You could cross the ocean in hours, you could pick up a telephone and talk to someone on the other side of the world, you could pick up an electric guitar and challenge the very foundations of society.

Radio, television, jazz, rock 'n' roll, movies, space travel, the Internet, nuclear warfare. Those are just a few of the things that came into being during my father's lifetime. His father could remember when there were still a few Indian tribes roaming free on the frontier; his grandfather grew up in a time when slavery was still considered normal.

If modern medicine continues to make progress, and if we don't destroy the planet through war or environmental degradation, some of you reading this may still be alive not just for the new millennium, but when the next century comes along in 2100. Do you have any idea what life will be like by then? I sure don't.

But then I couldn't, as a little boy, imagine what life would be like in the year 2000 either. In 1957, I got a piece of paper and figured out that I'd be 52 at the turn of the century. I couldn't even conceive what it would be like to be that old.

And you know, I still can't. I've had a life of sorts, a very eventful one by most standards, and it could go on for many years to come. But while I can remember countless bits and pieces that went to make up that life, I can't come close to grasping the actuality, the totality of the existence I've led.

How many tears, for example, how many sunsets, how many times when heaven and earth hung in the balance of a lover's yes or no? Can I put a measure on the aching dawns greeted between cold and unforgiving sheets, can my mind begin to encompass those certain moments when every last doubt fell away and we were in each other's arms, trying, as though we believed it were really possible, to crawl straight into each other's souls? Can I add up all the heartbreaks and ecstasies on some cosmic balance sheet? Can I put a price tag on the pain?

No, of course not, and what's worse is that even the fragmentary bits of memory and meaning that we tentatively call our lives start to fall away after a while, to blur together into some vague reminiscence about the good or the bad old days. I've been writing down stories and songs for 30 years now, and all of them together don't add up to the thoughts, dreams, passions, triumphs and tragedies that go careening through my brain on an average day in the time it takes to walk to the store and back.

I keep trying, and even my most phenomenal failures add up to art on some level, or at least are good for a laugh. Sometimes I think I've spent so much time and energy trying to make sense out of my life that I haven't really lived it. Recently I was telling some older guys—well, guys my age—some story about my drug-dealing and glam-fag adventures in the 1970s when I realized I had been talking for what seemed like an awfully long time.

"I'm sorry," I said, "I didn't mean to go on blabbing about myself like that." Nobody answered. I noticed that they were staring at me as though I had just climbed out of a space ship from Mars.

"Um, I haven't bored you all into a stupor, have I?" Finally one guy answered, "No, not at all, I was fascinated, I'm sure everyone was. I just found myself wondering how you could have gone through all that and still be sitting here in one piece." A couple of the others

nodded their heads in agreement.

"I don't know what you're talking about," I said. "Lots of people went through the same stuff I did..." But then I stopped, because I realized that most of those people were dead. And I had only been talking about ten years or so of my life, not even the most dangerous or exciting years.

It began to sink in that what had been normal, even boring, to me, was a source of amazement to these guys. And they weren't the most conventional bunch themselves. I heard myself saying, "I guess I really have had quite a life. Too bad I wasn't there for most of it."

I'm still thinking about what I meant by that. It's been the theme of this autumn's reflections. It may just be a variation on the plaque that used to hang on my grandfather's wall: "We grow too soon old and too late smart." But more than that, I see now that my mind was always racing ahead to tomorrow's promises or wallowing in yesterday's regrets, so much so that I missed much of what was actually happening in the here and now.

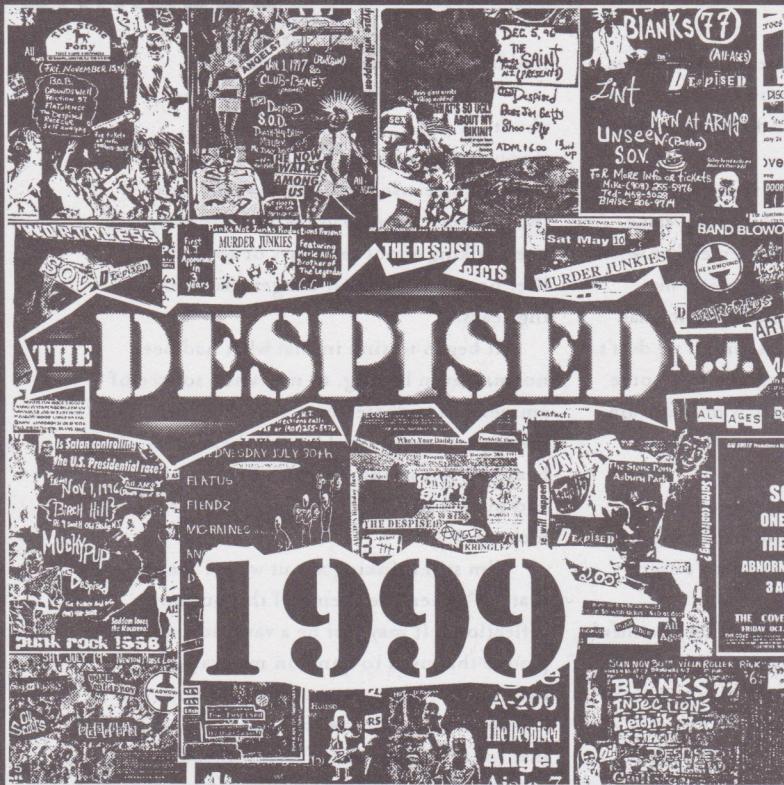
Every time I've been in love—and I'll bet I'm not alone in this—it was over almost before it began. It wasn't that all my love affairs were short-lived. Some lasted years, others only hours, but they all had this in common: The happier we were, the more completely time vanished, and the more love began to slip away, to be replaced by doubts and recriminations, the more time hung like a millstone around our necks. Not because it crawled slowly—no, anything but—but because we saw it and yet could not stop it dragging us inexorably to our doom.

I mention love because in my opinion it's the supreme expression of what it is to be alive, but the same principle applies to all we do and all we experience. October's falling leaves of red and gold, the poignancy and passion of a sunset or sunrise, the heart-quickenings exhilaration of spring bursting into bloom: We treasure these things precisely because we can not hold them. We see their beauty only in its passing.



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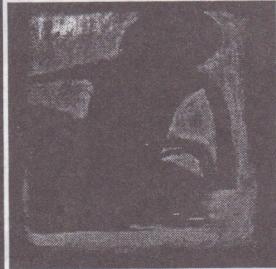
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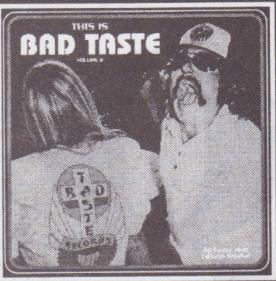
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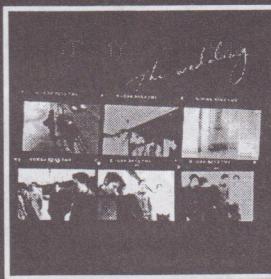
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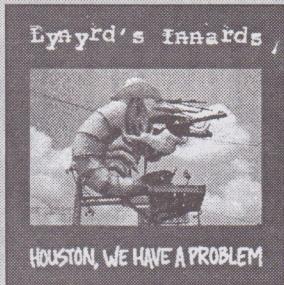
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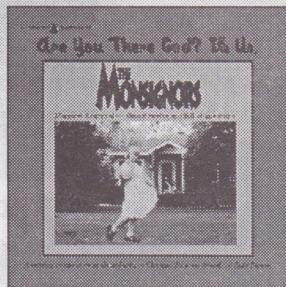
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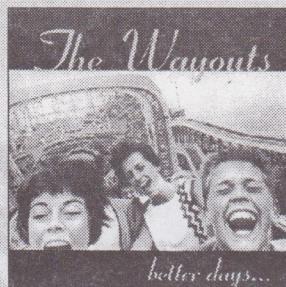
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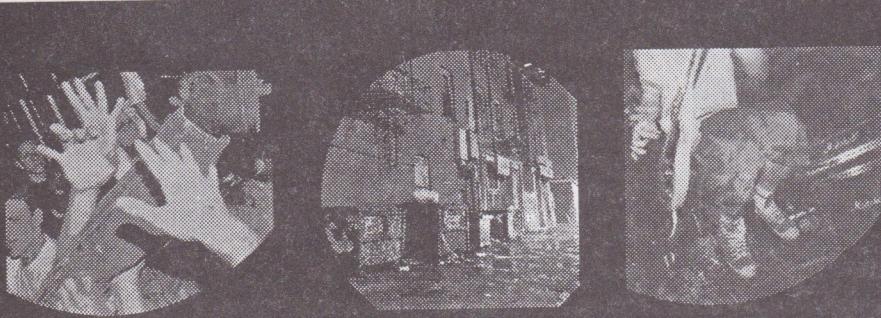


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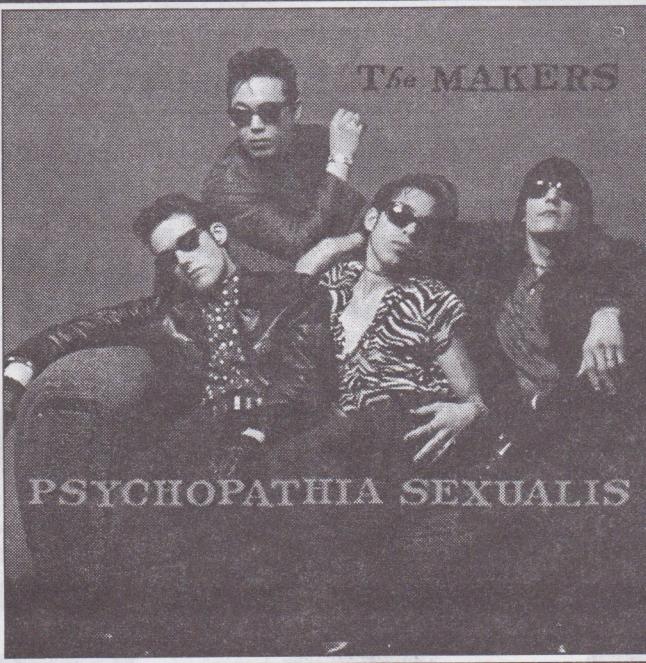
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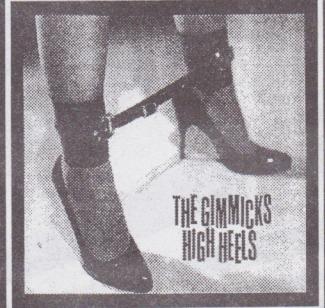
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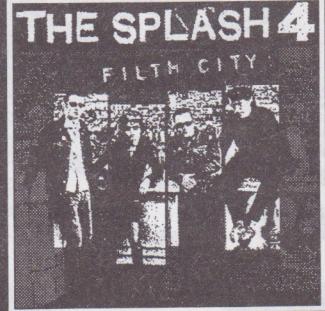
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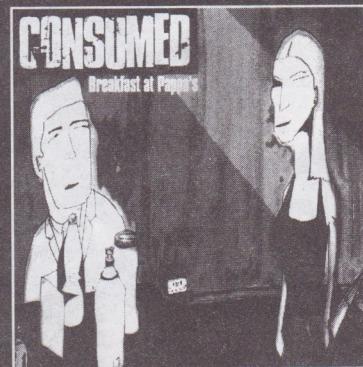
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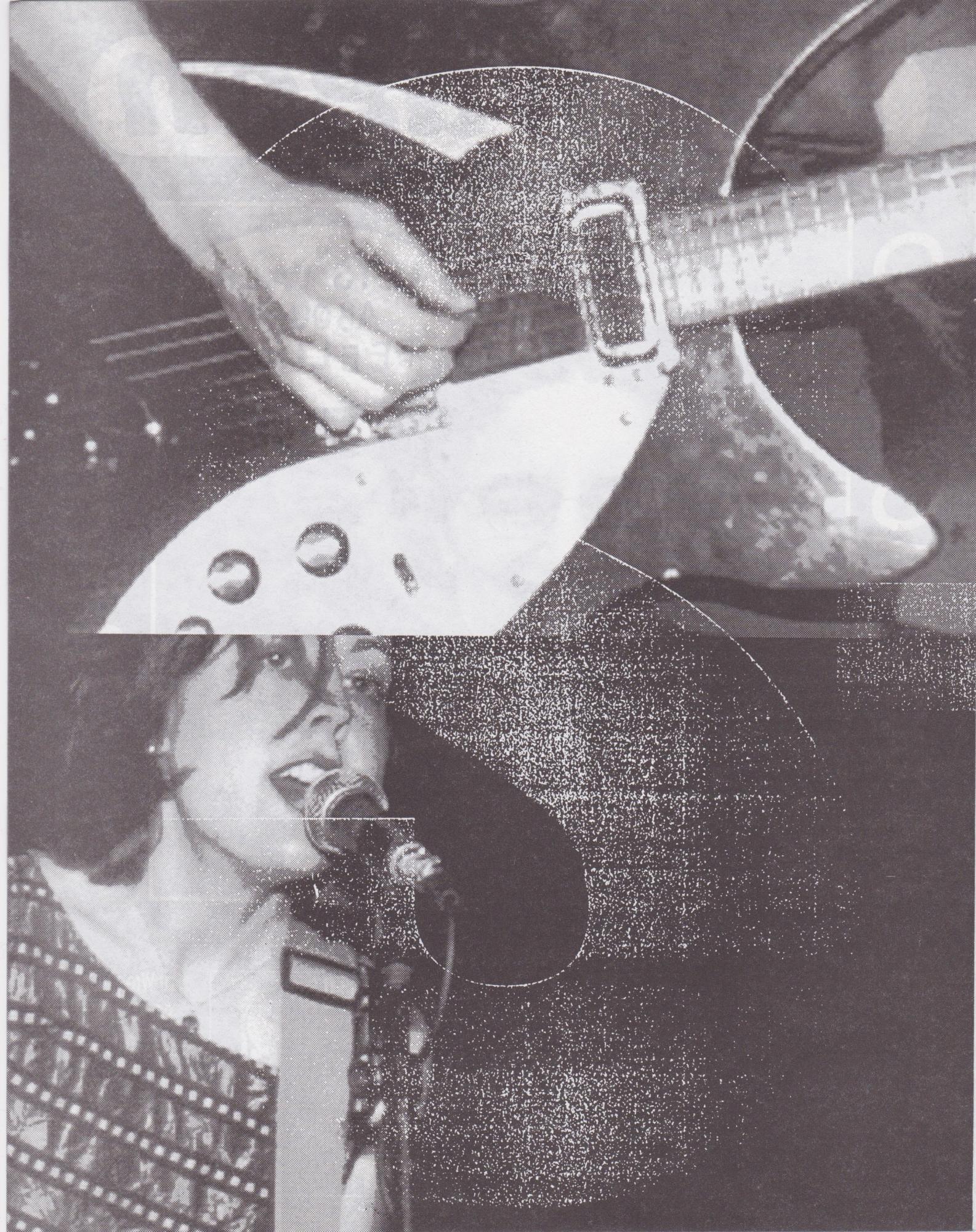


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Breakfast at Papar's

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Sleater-Kinney's Carrie Brownstein takes a breath before she whispers, "can't take this away from me / music is the air I breathe" from the song "Words + Guitar" off of the band's critically acclaimed album *Dig Me Out*. Brownstein's bandmate Corin Tucker answers right back in her trademark operatic roar: "Take take the noise in my head/ take take the noise in my head c'mon and turn turn it up." The packed crowd in Chicago's Metro eats it up—dancing, jumping up and down, singing the chorus along with the two women on stage.

Every time I've seen Sleater-Kinney—from when they played tiny clubs to even tinier crowds—to tonight, when they're playing a 1000-plus capacity club that is completely sold out, the crowd reaction has been the same. There's something about the band's potent mix of danceable beats, contrasting vocals and dueling guitars (in the best sense of the term) that electrifies their audience. However, with the release of the band's third record, *Dig Me Out* on Kill Rock Stars last year, the band didn't just electrify their fans, but critics as well. Seemingly overnight the band had transformed from being well-loved in the underground to total press darlings—and the crowds began to grow as a result.

As the press serenade hit mid-tour, the band found themselves booked into clubs that couldn't support the numbers of people that were coming out to see the band. It made for some uncomfortable moments—clubs full of people who had never heard the band, while Sleater-Kinney diehards were stuck outside without tickets—but the band pressed on through.

On the eve of the release of their new album *The Hot Rock*, Sleater-Kinney departed on a mini tour of the Midwest, playing decidedly larger clubs than the last time they came through. I had a chance to sit down with Corin, Carrie and drummer Janet Weiss and talk with them about their overnight notoriety, their past and their future.

Interview by Dan Sinker

Photos by Shawn Scullen

I think that we all have a certain amount of cynicism I think we've all sat around commenting on all the in there and how crappy all the bands are that are in there, you can't take it that seriously because you see

What I want to start with is talking about what it's like to wake up one morning and suddenly find articles about yourselves in every magazine and newspaper on the stands. It really just happened all of a sudden—at least it appeared that way watching from the outside. What was that like?

Carrie: The stuff that is important to us is so separate from what we read about us in magazines. Things like playing live and the kind of responses we get, or having fun with one another and getting along, or writing new songs and making a good record, or being a part of our community. Press just seems really extraneous so often. ¶ We quickly realized that a lot of the times there is a huge gap between what you're saying and the interpretation the writer has. Often times the printed interview doesn't even sound like us—it was like reading about people we didn't even know! ¶ I think it's good that it happened in the middle of the *Dig Me Out* tour, which was something that was very important to us—going city to city and playing live and connecting with people. You can't really tell if you're connecting with people if they're just reading about you in a magazine.

Janet: I think that we all have a certain amount of cynicism toward major national press and I think we've all sat around commenting on all the people they forget and never put in there and how crappy all the bands are that are in those magazines. When it's yourself in there, you can't take it that seriously because you see yourself among all this crap. You have to take it with a grain of salt. When the magazines forget us and have moved on, we'll still be making music and putting out records. ¶ But there's also something to be kind of proud of in a way—someone finally got it, someone finally realized what we are trying to do. And hopefully that article meant something to someone who read it and they got an idea about the music. Corin: The other thing about the press is

that we'd be on tour and suddenly all these people were showing up that had never really heard the music.

Janet: We call them Lookie-Loos.

Corin: But then the positive side to that is that there are kids reading the articles that don't have access to punk communities or would not have another way to gain access to our music.

Carrie: That's the main reason why we do it. Living in communities like Portland or Olympia, you kind of take for granted the underground and the fanzines and this kind of insular knowledge that just passes through word-of-mouth. But then you start getting letters that say "I read about you in Spin," from a 16 year old in Nebraska and you realize that this person won't hear about you at a show or through a fanzine. We've looked at the whole spectrum and there are definitely good and bad sides.

As far as bad sides go, I spent much of the day yesterday at the library and on the Internet looking up press about Sleater-Kinney in some of these mainstream magazines and newspapers to get an idea of what had been written. Some of them were pretty right-on, but most of them were really off base. But even in the good articles, there was this recurring theme where you are described as "not just another girl group," or "so good that gender isn't an issue at all." These writers are basically saying that being a woman is something that you've managed to rise above. Is that something that's hard to stomach?

Janet: I don't think about it on a day-to-day basis. We don't spend every day thinking about our gender and how it relates to music. But at the same time, I think it is a really powerful thing and it's not worth ignoring. The press definitely has an image as to what a girl band is supposed to be. Bands like the Go Gos or Cindy Lauper or the Spice Girls.

towards major national press and I people they forget and never put those magazines. When it's you in yourself among all this crap.—Janet

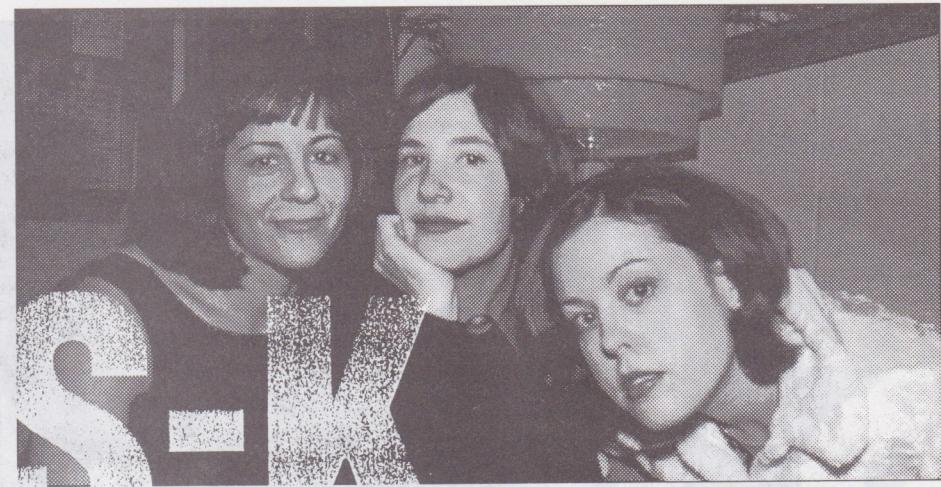
Carrie: It's like they think they're paying you a compliment by taking you out of the "girl group ghetto" and saying that you've transcended gender. But that's never been our goal. I mean, how could we possibly transcend something that's so experiential and part of who we are? And why would we ever want to be "Men In Rock?" It's not a history that we're a part of nor would we like to emulate it.

Janet: Maybe they're trying to say that we've transcended the cliché of the girl keyboard player in a mini skirt.

Corin: But that would be a more intelligent thing to say and they're not saying that. If they had said exactly that, it would be different. We've noticed a lot of really lousy, lazy journalists. They read the press kit and they write exactly what someone else wrote, just in different words—sometimes in the same words [laughs]. There's no real context or basis for many of these people to write about us. They have very little to refer to when they describe women who play music. You almost have to come up with a whole new vocabulary, really. Rock journalism has existed for as long as rock music, but when they try to describe something that doesn't fit easily into that same category with the same language, it's impossible.

In a way, that's a fault of rock journalism, which I've always found to be an especially illegitimate form of journalism. Having made attempts at going down that road before, I've gotten burned every time because, like you said, the language and framework that it works under is unbelievably constricting.

Janet: Complexity is just not acceptable to rock journalism. Something has to be one way or the other. It can't have shades of this or shades of that. Everything has to be put in really plain and simple terms.



Corin: It's just such a cop out. It's the same thing with mainstream music. They want it to be really simple and easy to understand. If it is music that is difficult or just complex or weird in some way, so many times it gets overlooked.

Which is why Sleater-Kinney is such an anomaly. Musically, you're very complex. On its surface it seems simple, but once you break it down it's actually really intricate. You have these competing guitar lines and competing vocal lines. It's such an anomaly that you would have found this relative success in the mainstream and that you'd be playing venues this size and getting the amount of press that you have. What do you attribute that to?

Janet: I think the people that do love it, love it so much. Writers see the reaction of our fans at shows and say, "What's happening?" They try to explain it, and they do so poorly, but enough people are attracted by it that more and more people come.

With the success of *Dig Me Out* and with the press you've gotten, did it make you approach the new album differently?

Carrie: You can't write your music for other people—especially the media. They're so into having you die so they can resurrect you later or having these trends that they need to follow. I think that true to any of our albums, we wrote it for ourselves and for the kind of music that we'd want to hear at the time. It's not like the new record is a major departure, but I think that every record should be different and I think we've

accomplished that. I'm really proud of this record, as I was when we finished *Dig Me Out* and as I was when we finished *Call The Doctor*. Just feeling like, "Wow, we did a good job." What's important to me is how we feel about it. I felt the same way about previous records, not knowing that the albums would be critically acclaimed or critically panned. You can't care about that because you will not last.

Janet: To me, it's stressful that we have all of this attention and expectation from people. It's changed our lives—it's changed mine. But it's not all bad. It's great that we're successful; it's keeping our band going. I think that we're really lucky and I'm really happy that we've been able to play these great tours and sell as many records as we do. It's a really great thing. **You just said that the recognition you've received has changed your life. In what sense?**

Janet: A lot of people that we know can't make money off of their music. I had to work jobs for years—I've worked eight or nine jobs to make money. But not only that, I finally feel like I'm successful as an artist and people take me seriously as such. So many girl bands are seen as not serious and we've really gotten the respect of not only the press, but also the music community. All these other guys in bands totally respect us. They can't say anything about our band because we're really good. That's great—it doesn't happen to that many bands.

In this new position of being respected and having people come to your shows and pay atten-



tion to you, have you taken it upon yourself to bring bands that may have been overlooked out with you and hopefully bring them into the spotlight as well?

Janet: When we're on tour, we always try to bring other bands—other bands with women especially—to play shows with us. We want to give them a chance to play in front of more people than they would normally and hopefully to expose those people to new things.

Carrie: You try to do as much as you can because people have done the same for us.

Corin: You also want to play with bands that you like. Otherwise, who knows?

With all the notoriety you got from *Dig Me Out* be it from press or radio play or record sales or whatever, there must have been major label interest. But the new album is coming out on Kill Rock Stars. What made you make the decision to stay independent?

Carrie: Actually, we didn't talk to any major labels between *Dig Me Out* and this record. We only talked to major labels between *Call the Doctor* and *Dig Me Out*. While we were working on this record, we talked to the people at Mordam, the people who distribute Kill Rock Stars. They know our music, they know the stores, they have a relationship with the label and with us. There was a feeling of having a sense of community. The same was true with sticking with Kill Rock Stars: it was the obvious choice without uprooting us from our community. ¶ One thing the media does is take you out of context. We all

come from being supportive of women and being active in a lot of things in our community. Usually the media just acts like we fell from the sky. I think we wanted to stay as rooted as possible for as long as we could. **Going back to earlier when you said that getting a lot of press wasn't something that was important to you and that one thing that was important to you is the audience and your interactions with them, how has playing increasingly larger places effected that relationship?**

Janet: I think it's a little different. We still play pretty small places in a lot of areas, but in San Francisco, for instance, we play the Great American Music Hall, which is really big. It actually was really fun! I didn't expect it to be that fun. I think that some people are bummed though. They're watching one of their favorite bands and now they have to share it with all these people. But that's just something that happens.

Carrie: All ages shows are totally important to us. When we play 18 and over shows, it usually is not as fun as all ages shows are. We really like to have the energy of the younger kids coming to the front who are willing to express their enjoyment of the music by dancing and jumping up and down. I mean, we don't necessarily jump up and down to our favorite bands anymore, so we understand when people just want to stand in the back and cheer, but it's really great to have a mix of both going on. ¶ In a big club, I think we just try to put on the same show we would at a small club. But obviously, it's not the same as a 200 capacity room that's

I don't think we set out with an hearts or what we see around on what other people want us

packed with a stage that's tiny—there's a different feeling for that. What we've realized is that it's better to allow everyone to be in there that wants to be there. The dilemma that you run into if you want to keep playing small clubs is that there are 200 kids outside that can't get in!

Janet: It's really depressing! They all are begging you to sneak you in—it's really sad! I think we've all been there. I've been outside clubs a million times without a ticket and would try to get in any way I could. It's hard to walk by all those kids. You feel terrible! But at the same time, we read a lot of stuff on the Internet and we know there are kids that are sad we're not playing small places anymore.

Speaking of the Internet... One criticism that I've heard lobbed in your direction is that you've been able to achieve success because you're not overtly political. Do you think that's a legitimate complaint?

Corin: I think that depends on what people's idea of success is. For us, we always wanted to succeed as musicians and we want to be seen and respected as musicians. I don't necessarily want to be seen as a political activist. It's not the most important thing in my life. I think as far as this band goes, we try and always do what we think is right, but we don't necessarily worry about what other people think.

Carrie: If people think we're not political in order to open the door to success, they wouldn't be thinking correctly, that's for sure. I think that as songwriters, our influences have grown and widened as we've gotten older and I think how we write lyrics has changed—they're less cathartic and guttural now. I couldn't write a song lyrically like I did on our first record. I think at that time, I needed to write those songs but I feel like it would be dishonest to do it now. That's the main thing: Nothing we do

agenda. We set out to sing about what's in our hearts that we feel we want to sing about—not based on what we see around us that we feel we want to sing about—not based on what other people want us to sing about. Whether that's political or non-political is just what happens. I wouldn't want to limit ourselves to saying, "we're a political band" or "we're not a political band" or even, "we're a punk band" or "we're a rock band." Those terms are very limiting as an artist today.

That brings up an interesting question that I like to ask people. You just referred to yourself as an artist and all of you have referred to yourselves as musicians throughout our conversation. Nowadays when people ask me what I do, I'll say that I'm an editor or I'm a designer or a writer, but that's only a recent thing—when I started *Punk Planet* that was never my intention or even remotely how I perceived myself. Have you always referred to yourselves as artists and musicians or was there a moment where you realized that those were the best words to describe what you do or to describe what it was that you'd ultimately like to achieve?

Janet: I think it's part of finally admitting to yourself that, "Yes, I am a musician." I think that calling yourself a musician isn't something that happens overnight—it's a process. You finally realize that is what you're going to dedicate your life to—at least for now. It's still kind of a weird thing to be able to say it [laughs] but I'm proud of being able to say it. It's really what I feel I'm best at in the

world and how I can contribute most to other people's lives and make a difference to other people.

Carrie: As overconfident as it may sound to use the word "musician," especially in an indie music context, the word "musician" doesn't fair very well in society as a whole! [laughs] When I was in college and playing in this band, I would tell people I was a student.

Janet: For as long as we could, I think we probably all said we were something else, but there's just a point where you can't deny it. I'm really really proud to do what I do. To be able to see the reactions on people's faces as you do what you love is an amazing thing.

The theme of honesty has come up a few times in this discussion and now that I think about it, that's probably one of the first things that I connected with when I first heard *Call the Doctor*. One thing I've always wondered is how people in bands like yours, who write these really honest songs—these really personal songs—can get up there and sing them night after night. Does that kind of repetition change your relationship with the songs?

Corin: I think it really depends. The whole idea of a song is that it's created in the space around you. There's a certain space you get into whenever you hear the music, but it's really different every time you play it. The power of certain songs some nights can become more intense than when you wrote it—it can take on a whole different meaning.

Carrie: I think meaning can be poured to the song both externally and internally. Sometimes the audience is almost pouring more meaning—or a different meaning—than yours and you pick up on that. I don't think you can ever continually return to the place you were when you wrote a song, but some-

times a song does put you back there or put you in a place that's similar.

Janet: I think it takes you to a new place. When we're playing live and the three of us are exploding in the same spot, it's really like no other feeling you can imagine. We're creating this new meaning from songs by taking the meaning that's there and blowing it up in front of a thousand people. It's really amazing.

Corin: When I play, I get really, really physical. I can't sing "Little Mouth" without really feeling it—there's no other way I could make it sound like that. It's really physically draining to be on tour sometimes because you have to put yourself through that. I can see why some bands won't do certain songs anymore because when you're singing that song, it's like you're going through it. It may be different every time, but it's always physical and it's always emotional.

Because of the complexity of your songs, I'm kind of curious how you approach writing them. You have opposing vocals saying different things and you have these opposing guitar lines that are often competing against each other and yet somehow it all works. I can't imagine that it's a traditional songwriting method.

Carrie: I don't know anything about traditional songwriting methods! Rarely—especially on the last two records—did one of us come in with an entire song. The songs are often these puzzle pieces that end up fitting together. We really go back and forth with our guitar parts—it's become easier and easier over the years because we've come to know the other person so well musically. It's really interesting sometimes because I'll be so surprised with what Corin will come up with based on what I've written. Sometimes it seems like we're simultaneously writing two different songs that end up as one! The new record is even more like

This band is really equal in terms of everything—everyone writes, everyone makes decisions. That's really important to us. If one person really doesn't want to do something, we won't do it.—Corin

that—our guitars will be practically soloing through the whole song and then we'll be singing two different melodies over the entire song. It's like, "Here's two people's interpretation of the same song with Janet trying to hold it together." [laughs] ¶ Before Janet was in the band, Corin and I really needed to be grounded. I think that's what Janet really added to the band. She really gave *Dig Me Out* a center that *Call The Doctor* didn't have.

After you come up with the music, how do the vocals come together?

Carrie: We'll have a song and Corin will be singing and then we'll get to the chorus and she'll say, "You should sing something at the chorus." But the thing is, I'll never think to sing the same thing as her! [laughs] The logical thing would be to harmonize with Corin or sing an octave higher or lower, but instead I end up writing a whole different melody. That's the way our whole musical dialogue works. There's not a lot of sameness there—there's a lot of contrast.

Corin: I think we complement each other. We may be doing different things, but I think it works.

And finally, how do the lyrics come in? To me, that's where the layers upon layers of contrasting sounds really comes to a head.

Janet: That's what's amazing to me. They'll be singing about the same thing but one will be talking about totally different aspects than the other. I think the new record is lyrically the most complex. It's like a ball—talking around the sides of it about the thing in the middle. These two voices just giving their two cents in totally different languages and using totally different terms.

Carrie: I'm responding to what Corin's singing. It's the truest way for us to communicate, really. I don't join in, I respond. It's kind of like finishing someone else's sen-

tence—or more like grounding it. Like saying "Maybe it's not like that."

Corin: Saying, "I wasn't thinking it was like that, I was thinking it was more like this."

Carrie: It is conscious/subconscious. We fill in a lot of spaces in our songs.

What made you happen upon this way of working?

Corin: If you go from our first record to now, it's gotten lyrically and melodically a lot more complex. On the first record, we never sang together. On *Call The Doctor* we started to and on *Dig Me Out* it happened more and more. We're not following any rules. We're not saying, "Maybe things would be more palatable if we all came in on a chorus right there."

Carrie: I think that the songs where we both sing are our best songs. We figured it out with "Call The Doctor"—that song is so great and it totally works because we both sang on it. We have such different voices and they compliment each other—they make the song bigger when we both sing.

That approach to songwriting speaks of a high level of intimacy between all of you. I think if you grabbed three random musicians and threw them into a room, they would never emerge with songs that sound like yours. There's a great deal of friendship and trust between the three of you to be able to come up with that. This kind of brings us back to the beginning of our conversation—when something like the success and the press and notoriety that you all have received, it will affect each of you differently and you will react to it differently. Have you noticed that change your inter-band relations, or is the band a bubble that you can go into that's sort of separate from all of that?

Janet: I think we're really protective of the bond that we have and we work really hard and make specific decisions to protect it. I

think we're really conscious of it and without that, we wouldn't exist. I think that we do whatever we can to keep communications open and make sure that we don't get too overwhelmed by things and to keep control over our destiny. It can feel like a snowball rolling down a hill sometimes.

Corin: I think that there's a lot of compromise that comes from being in a band that's a collaboration, instead of just one person being the frontperson and the rest of the band playing instruments. This band is really equal in terms of everything—everyone writes, everyone makes decisions. That's really important to us. If one person really doesn't want to do something, we won't do it. I think we are really different people and if it was just us as individuals, we would have taken this band in totally different places. But it's more interesting to have to do this as a collaboration.

You mentioned "controlling your destiny." What do you see as your destiny?

Corin: We want to rule the world. [laughs]

Janet: I think we tend to have short-term goals as a band. I think the short-term goal is to get this tour finished and in the can and start working on a new record. But I think what I'd like to do most is get along as people and to not allow ourselves to make decisions that are going to hurt the others in the band or make it so that we feel uncomfortable playing music together.

Carrie: So many of the rock clichés are about "live fast, die young." But we want to have longevity. We don't want to be placed prematurely in any sort of historical context because we like playing together so much. We've worked really hard to make sure this is something we can do for a long time because we all need it. ☺

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Whether you're at a show because you're angry at the world, or you're there because you want to undermine the capitalist infrastructure, or whether you're heartbroken and depressed, or whether you're in love and happy, whatever the fuck you're there for, you should all be able to be in the same place and enjoy it. —Dan

You've smelled what Kid Dynamite are cooking up before. Let's be honest and call a fast melodic hardcore band a fast melodic hardcore band. But like mom's homecooked falafel sandwiches, it's a taste, when done right, that you never get sick of. Dan and Jason were nice enough to sit down with me outside the ever charming Fireside Bowl for a chat about this that and the other thing. They've got a new album out on Jade Tree and no doubt will soon be crowned the hardest working band in punk. I mean hardcore. I mean hardcore punk.

by Christopher Josh Hooten, Esq.
photos by Tim Owen

You started Kid Dynamite by putting up a flyer looking for people to be in the band. That you had to resort to posting open-call flyers is surprising to me—it seems like having Lifetime under your belt would have made it really easy to find people who wanted to play with you.

Dan: You'd be surprised how few adults there are who really want to play hardcore punk that are competent and have a good aesthetic sense and good roots. I was surprised it took a flyer too—now nothing surprises me anymore. [Laughs] It was a struggle. ¶ Screening was a great deal of work. I immediately screened out anyone not in their 20s. Not to be ageist, but the chances of someone being 17 and being a good call for us was very slim. It wasn't that I wasn't willing to hear people out, but it usually didn't take long to find out. I'd ask what kinds of stuff they were writing about and I'd get responses like, "Well I just wrote a song about how I hate my school." I'm glad that people still write songs about how they hate their schools, but I'm too old to try and get away

with that now. [Laughs] It would be like one of those pop punk bands writing a song about having a crush on someone in algebra class. That's embarrassing when you're 30 years old.

Plus, it borders on illegal in a lot of states. [Laughs]

Dan: Also, I had to screen out a lot of people who didn't get what I meant by being aggressive but also melodic. A lot of people's idea of melodic was one of those metalcore bands who every once in a while will hit some note and hold it, "AAAAAAA!!!!!"—some sort of Iron Maiden note. That's not melodic, that's metal. ¶ Jason was the find of the century. We were practicing with no vocals for a year before we found him.

Jason: I never even saw the flyer.

Dan: You must have been living in a bomb shelter! I would bring a stack of like a hundred to every show and leave them on the admission table. I had like 10 different flyers so that when one was getting old and yellowing on the wall somewhere, I could replace it with a different one.

Jason: That was during the time that I was living in Philly but my band, Bound, was in New Jersey. On weekends the only shows I would have time to go to would be shows that we were playing, so I never would have seen them. And I'm sure you weren't flyering at Bound shows unless you were flyering at metal shows.

Dan: Jay came to us from a metal band.

So if you didn't see the flyer, how did you come to audition?

Jason: It's a long story. The short version is that my friend had tried out months before I

decided to. I had heard the tape when he was trying out and since my band was breaking up and I still wanted to be doing music, I figured I'd give it a shot.

While you were trying out all these singers, did you know what you were looking for, or did you just know it when you heard it?

Dan: I was looking for him.

[To Jason] So what were you looking for?

Jason: Musically, I was looking for a band that would challenge me. I was looking for a band where I could throw away all the bullshit that went along with bands—all the pissy fights about creative control and so forth. I wanted to throw all the segregation in the scene out. The type of band I was in before, we were just completely separate; nobody wanted us to play shows because we weren't the right kind of music. When I heard the tape of the music Kid Dynamite was playing, I thought it was awesome. I thought it would be a lot of fun to sing with these guys, so I started writing some lyrics. I got Dan's number and I told him I wanted to try out. I really wanted to make music again and this is exactly what I wanted.

Dan: I'm tired of people asking me if I play punk or if I play hardcore. What does that mean? I'd like to go on record and say that one thing we're not about is this factionalizing of the underground scene. When the most amazing live bands play—bands like Avail—you'll see straightedge kids and street punk kids and all these other people dancing together, having a good time. Whether you're at a show because you're angry at the world, or you're there because you want to undermine the capitalist infrastructure, or whether you're heartbroken and depressed,

or whether you're in love and happy, whatever the fuck you're there for, you should all be able to be in the same place and enjoy it. I think it's silly to try and dissect it and figure out if this is or isn't punk or hardcore music.

So in the spirit of scene unity, you go see a lot of emo bands then?

Dan: Um, no. [Laughs] I like the occasional metal band. I go see some ska bands. I go see the Promise Ring, I think they're good. I like old emo bands like Embrace or Rites of Spring—I love all that stuff.

Emo is the only place you can go, have something tagged as "emotional," yet have a complete lack of emotion at the shows.

Jason: It has become such a package now.

It seems to me that nobody moves, nobody dances—even the bands just stand around! What's emotional about that? Your lyrics that I can't even hear or understand? Fuck off.

Jason: A lot of the times bands get together and they can't even play their instruments. They're passing it off as music, but they can't play. I know from experience—bands I've played with, bands I've seen—they're not making any sense out of the chords and the sounds they're making.

But a lot of my favorite bands throughout the years probably didn't know how to play their instruments, but they were my favorite bands

because they could do something else. If you can't play your instrument you have to have some other kind of impact. That's the only way you can pull it off. To me, it's doubly bad when a band can't play, but also just get up there and don't move and write these faux-deep lyrics that are supposed to move me because they're so vague and about some lost love or something.

Dan: You're right about impact. Modern emo and indie rock stuff has very little impact. I'm tired of the lack of energy at those kinds of shows. I can appreciate it as music—not necessarily music that I'd be into—but it's almost insulting when I see it as a force in my scene because there's nothing happening. I understand the original point, that it was a response to violent dancing—I've lived through so many scene cycles where there's violent dancing and then it all falls apart and there's no place to have shows anymore, I understand that—but I don't think an absence of physicality is the answer to that.

I think the answer could be found with Fidelity Jones: get naked.

Dan: That was a good response.

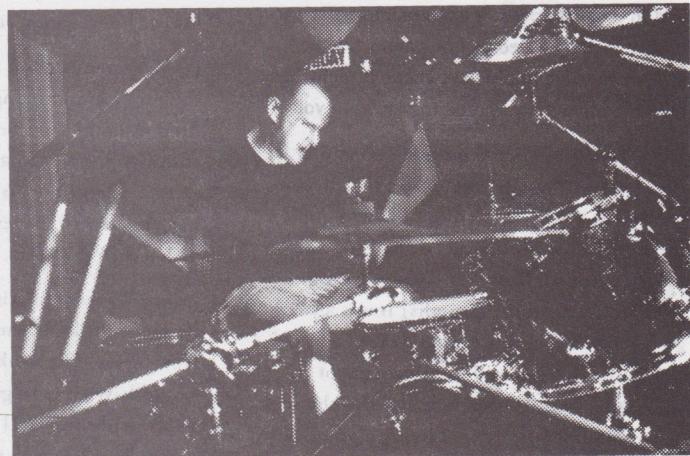
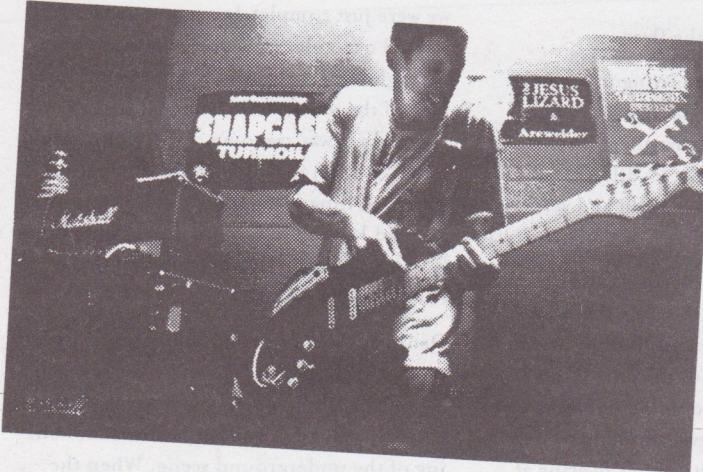
The three of us have been hanging around this scene for a while and it seems like the problems in the scene have been here the whole time. It doesn't seem like in the 11 years I've been hanging around, things have changed at all! We all like to think that sexism and racism and so forth have been addressed and are over with but

the fact of the matter is there are just as few girls and minorities and homosexuals and so forth here tonight as there were when I went to see Corrosion of Conformity 10 years ago in Washington DC. Those issues are believable when you first get involved, you think to yourself, "Wow, here's a scene that is fighting against those things, this is so cool!" But if you hang out long enough, you start to realize that none of those things have changed. Like all these very basic issues seem ridiculous even to bring up these days because they seem so five years ago, like we dealt with all of this five years ago while in fact now it's no different.

Dan: I think there are certain things that have improved. I'm not trying to be overly idealistic because I basically agree with you, but I think there are some things that have gotten better in more than just a superficial way. I think people imagine we're over racism as a problem because they think we've already solved it—that's horseshit. It's a fantasy. I also think there's much more of a space for women in the scene and more space for gay culture. Maybe now we have tolerance instead of acceptance, which is still pretty insulting.

Perhaps it's gotten to a point where, let's say a woman wanted to get up and do something, people would pay attention and give her the opportunity. But the encouragement to actually get up there isn't there.

Jason: I think, since the scene is made up of



I think it's very fashionable right now to be really cynical and think that punk rock never changed anything.

mostly white males, the issues aren't really issues because there isn't much of a cultural mix. But the rise of girls and women in hardcore has been amazing. There are zines and there are more bands with a mix of musicians. It definitely brings more people out to see shows. In Bound, we had a female drummer and so many girls would come out just to support Dana. Then they would end up hanging out and getting more involved in different aspects of the scene.

Dan: I think it's very fashionable right now to be really cynical and think that punk rock never changed anything. I call bullshit on that because it changed me and I, in turn, am going to cling to the belief that I have made some kind of impact on the world around me. I'm going to believe that it will last for other people for more than some two year fad. The older people who are still involved are now doing zines or bands or labels—punk rock and hardcore changed them too. Those people do have an effect on the world around them. I don't buy into that cynicism, but I also think we live in a Pollyanna-ish fantasy world. The history of punk rock is really brief. It's like 20-some-odd years. We imagine that we've gotten over all these "isms" to the point that we don't even have to talk about them anymore. The history of this country is much longer than 20-something years and as a country we're far from over all these issues. We can't look

back and think, "Oh the history of punk rock has taken us past sexism and heterosexism." It hasn't. But I definitely think it has had an impact. I don't know if it's had a macro-cultural impact but it's had an impact on the people involved.

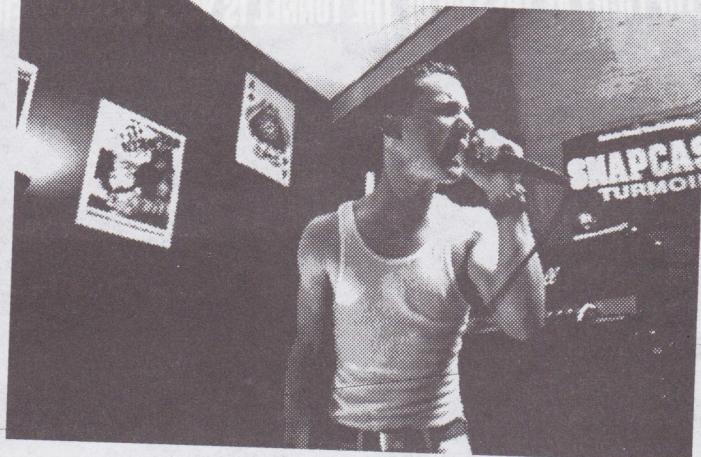
I just bring it up because at this point in my life, it seems everything I do now is related to punk rock in some way. There isn't much else I do that isn't related to it. I know a number of people like me and everyone is equally disillusioned by it. But we're all still here because we believe deep down that something is happening—otherwise we would have all moved on.

Dan: The disillusionment comes naturally with age I think because you learn to become self-critical at some point. And self-critical evaluation includes becoming critical of the culture you find yourself in. But yeah, a lot of people that get to that point are still involved despite the disillusionment.

When I first got into punk rock, I'd say for the first seven or eight years I didn't really know many other people that were into it and I moved around a lot so I wasn't deeply rooted in any particular scene. And I still feel that way to a point even though every day is spent working on punk-related things. But I feel like it's been a good thing that I've always felt a little removed because it makes it easier for me to look at it from a distance. There have always been aspects of punk that seem really silly to me, but

I found that the more things I could sort of see through and see as bullshit, the more active I could become and the more stuff I would do. Complaining is one thing, but physically doing something to make it better is something else completely.

Dan: I got into it at a distance just like you did. I went to my first shows when I was in high school, but when I started getting fully into it, like fully immersed in it, I was in college. I was in the Midwest, so I was doing everything mailorder, reading *Maximum Rock 'n' Roll* and ordering \$50 worth of records a month. But I didn't really know any other punk rockers and nobody came to tour in Michigan then, so I was immersed in punk rock through the music and the lyric sheets. I remember moving back to New Jersey and starting a band with these people who were maybe three or four years younger than me and being really freaked out that most of these people didn't live up to the world I had imagined in my head from these lyrics I had been reading. That was actually really disturbing to me. These people would be making kind of off color jokes that I couldn't really relate to. I thought I was dreaming. These were like the paragons of New Jersey hardcore punk and they were talking the kinds of shit that I would never even say in private, let alone in public. I felt like we were living in a fantasy world created by slogans. It needs to run a lot deeper than that. ☺



I call bullshit on that because it changed me and I, in turn, am going to cling to the belief that I have made some kind of impact on the world around me.

—Dan

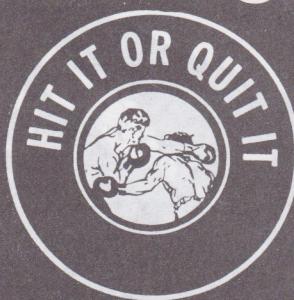
HIT IT



OR QUIT IT

MAGAZINES

THE LIGHT AT THE END OF THE TUNNEL IS YOUR SCENE ON FIRE



Hit It Or Quit It Magazineses Jessica Hopper speaks a version of the truth a lot of people don't like to hear. She refuses to be intimidated by the scene powers that be and she calls em like she sees 'em, friend or foe. This makes for a lot of foes and a lot of really loyal friends. Her zine is exciting in what it attempts to do. It runs the gamut from damn funny to "damn that's harsh" mean, to make-you-cry serious —sometimes in the span of one paragraph. But above all, it's a critical voice that refuses to take itself or anybody else too seriously. ¶ Crazy busy all day everyday, Hopper splits her time between running her own PR business, Hyper PR, doing the zine, and spending a few hours a week helping out at *Punk Planet*. Hopper's creation can be as hard as nails, but there's a softer side to Sears. Jessica and I sat down on a rainy day, ate some food, and chatted it up for a while talking about the scene we love to hate and hate to love. by Josh Hooten

OK, here's the question you've had three months to prepare for: Would you rather be loved or feared?

This has been torturing me. I'm so glad you forewarned me about this question, otherwise we'd be sitting here until next month. I've been going back and forth. Here's how I've broken it down so far: From being totally loved all the way down to the point of mildly disliking you, the average person is still going to be nice to your face. I don't like it when people are fake nice to me. I can sense it. I can smell it. I'm like a dog. [Laughs] I wish more people were like me—I don't like people until they give me a reason to like them. [Laughs]

Most people work in the other direction.

Yes, yes. But at the same time, I have this other thing were I may not like a person, but I'll respect them in general. The second thing I was thinking about this question is if I wanted to be loved, I'm doing a really bad job. [Laughs] You know what I mean? I'm really going the wrong way with that part. Then I thought of it like this: Who is more powerful, a troop of boy scouts or the Mafia? If one of those people asks you to pick up their mom at the airport, you're going to be more inclined to do what the Mafia asks you to do. Not that I'm that mean or powerful, but I think it's more useful to be feared—it's just so much more practical. [Laughs] But you didn't ask which was more useful.

Let's think of it in terms of how you'd want to be remembered.

Like, "This person was scary," or "This person was happy?" I don't know—it's such a

dilemma! Everybody wants to be loved and I'd be lying if I said I didn't, but there's nothing interesting about being loved. Technically, it would be fascinating for a little while maybe but being hated, you have an ongoing *Falcon Crest*-type saga going on in your life. [Laughs] Being looked back upon, a lot of people that I really like were never accepted or loved until they were dead.

For me, I'm automatically drawn to people that are disliked more than people who are liked. If you don't know someone who is liked, you can kind of assume that you'd probably like them too if you knew them.

Being liked is so ineffectual. Anger has so much more power to it than joy. People are only intrigued by happiness for so long. But anger is so much more compelling.

Yes, exactly. I'm much more interested, historically, in troublemakers—people that didn't fit right.

It's true about bands too. I have so much more to say about bands that I don't like than I do about bands that I do like.

It's that opinion of you—of having more to say that's negative than positive—that has driven this whole line of questioning so far. You do talk shit in *Hit It Or Quit It*, and you do write really negative reviews. A lot of people don't like it. How do you react to their criticisms?

My friend Liz pointed out to me the other day that when women step out and do things that are controversial or assertive, they have to be doing it either in the name of feminism or art. Those are the two socially acceptable things for women to do when they're doing something controversial. ¶ When I first started doing this zine, I was just as assertive as I am now but I was like 15 or 16 and people were like, "Oh that will go away over time." People were really freaked out about it. In Minneapolis when I was in like the 10th grade, there was really horrible shit written about me in kids fanzines and on fucking bathroom walls and shit. And it wasn't necessarily because I was talking shit, it was just that I wasn't going to shut up and some people felt threatened that I wasn't intimidated. I saw nothing wrong with what I was doing because it's just my opinion. It's not like *Hit It Or Quit It* is *USA Today* and the whole country is going to read it and believe it. It's

just my opinion, it's just what I think. ¶ If you look at some of the most remembered and important fanzines of the early '90s, like *Conflict* and *Your Flesh*—which is still around—or *Forced Exposure*—the most revered of them all—they were all magazines that were known for being super critical. People loved the people writing in that stuff. But it was a total boys club. All those magazines were and are such a boys club—and people embrace it. Even today it's the same thign. Take *Change* zine: Pat says more bluntly mean things than I say—like saying the Promise Ring is music his grandparents should be listening to—and people applaud him. They say, "Yeah, Pat tells it like it is!" I could do the same thing—I could even do it in a tamer way—and it would be received 10 times worse. ¶ Fairly recently—and feel free to put Chris Leo's name with this—the Lapse were playing and I gave him a copy of the magazine with a review of their record where I said I didn't like the drumming but I thought the record was really good. That night, while he was both drunk and sober we had the same conversation where he said I think the drumming sucks because I want to fuck Dave Leto [drummed on The Lapse record] and he wouldn't fuck me, or because I fucked him, or I have no taste, or I'm deaf, or I'm stupid. He totally named all these reasons he thought I didn't like the drumming. But maybe I just don't think he was the right drummer for that band! You listen to that record and it sounds like he's just bashing through the music; it sounds like they wrote the songs without him. If I was a guy, it'd be like, "Oh it's no big deal" or "Oh he's kind of an asshole." But makes it out like I'm writing from some groupie-who's-been-rejected viewpoint. You have to be fucking kidding me. What Neanderthal fucking planet did you just get beamed down from? Don't drag your knuckles on the ground around me, go somewhere else. It's like I couldn't actually have an opinion or I couldn't actually know anything about music. But you know what? I know a lot about music. I've never had a job that didn't have something to do with it. I think I know what I'm talking about. I can't even have a valid opinion because I'm a girl. It kind of freaks me out when I think these are the people who's bands I'm writing about and these are the people who's bands I'm supporting. It's disgusting! Some people write to me telling me they have a problem with my criticism, but you don't see them

writing to other magazines. I guess some magazines work under the idea that they won't give something a bad review if the label buys ads from them, but I don't feel that invisible tie to advertisers. ¶ It kind of scares me when you look in all these magazines and see how many times they interview a woman in a band. They may think they're liberated and they may think they're some kind of political science major and they may think they're completely informed about the ills of the world but they don't even have common respect towards women. They don't even see that they are conditioned to invalidate whatever opinion I'm asserting.

I think it's one of those things were everybody assumes—because it's punk rock—that we don't have sexism and racism and so forth in our little club.

Because we're wearing all these patches that say so. I went to this Fugazi show in St. Louis on Thanksgiving and there was this kid with all these patches and shit all over his jacket and on the back of his white T-shirt in huge

a brother and a sister and friends, whereas I made hats after school. For real, it was a phase that I went through, I would sew up hats after school.

At that sweatshop you worked in? [Laughs]

I don't know what I was doing! I didn't have anything to do during the summer and I realized that I hated television. I would just ride my bike all day. ¶ When I was in about the fourth grade, I started being really politically aware. I'd come home and read *Newsweek* and *US News and World Report*—my Social Studies teachers loved me! I was a really serious feminist. During the summer, I would go and volunteer 20 or 30 hours a week at everything from the National Abortion Rights Action League to anything involving South America. I was answering the phones and volunteering at all these events and so forth. I was going to rallies all the time until I was in about the ninth grade. The last one I went to was an "impeach Dan Quayle" rally. I totally burnt out. I couldn't sleep at night because I didn't think I could

It's the personal political.

I think that's much more effective. The smaller the scale, the better the chance of effecting someone in a really direct way. Going back to being a tough critic, I want to talk about things you do like. What gets your respect? What makes something good?

What makes something good and what gets my respect can be two different things. Something I've realized that ties all my recent favorite bands together is that they all almost exist between genres. Except Madonna. I'm totally obsessed with Madonna—she's does not exist between any two genres, she is purely pop music. But The Dismemberment Plan or Smart Went Crazy or Pere Ubu—my favorite punk rock stuff is more arty. It needs to have a uniqueness and it has to have soul. It has to be brave. It has to be attempting something new even if it's not executing it well. The bands that are truly my long-time favorites, I have to be able to hear the soul to it. To hear that they're trying hard. It has to be something where you can't just go, "Oh,

WHAT I'M USUALLY APPALLED BY IS PEOPLE

black magic marker letters it said, "Fight Sexism." Like what is this person actually doing in their life to challenge sexism? I think wearing a shirt is like saying, "I want people to think this." But is somebody going to read his shirt and be like, "You know, he's right! Brothers, this is a call to arms! We shall liberate you, woman!" [laughs] And you know, maybe he really is an empathetic person—a true brother in the feminist struggle [laughs]—but it's a phase. Everybody goes through their phases. You see kids like that all the time. And yes, the sentiment is good, but what are you really doing for these causes? Not like I'm really active in politics—I literally got burned out in the seventh grade.

Were you student body president? Was the politicking too much for you? [Laughs]

Yeah, that was it. [Laughs] No. I was kind of a weird kid and I didn't have any friends. I was talking to my boyfriend about how different his life was growing up because he had

do enough out there. ¶ I used to go to all these anti-General Electric actions and we dressed up in gas masks and carried around these petitions to get people to sign to try and stop GE. I remember at this one rally my parents went shopping downtown, and they didn't know where I was—I was in the sixth grade, I was just this little kid. I saw my parents and I ran up to them wearing this gas mask and I was waving and yelling at them through the gas mask. They didn't know it was me so I pulled the mask off and they were just like, "What are you doing?" [laughs] ¶ I was overcome by politics. I would cry myself to sleep wondering what was I doing to stop nuclear war. By the time I got into punk rock, I never even listened to political punk bands because it bored the shit out of me.

I think what you do now—being an opinionated woman publishing a music magazine in the context of a very male-run scene—is a very political act.

emo from Pennsylvania." [laughs] Now that may be the kind of music some people like and that may be what speaks to them. I can't fault anyone for liking what they like or even trying to emulate it, but I enjoy the things that are more on the weird side.

I think sincerity has a way of transcending the sound that goes with it.

Yeah. If you are sincere, I think you've automatically built up this musically karma and you deserve to have it outwardly reflected. People will feel it. People will know you are for real and you get to be a for real band if you're sincere enough. Not acting sincere, but the real stuff! I need things that aren't so overbearingly conscious. Like when people start a band and say "Fugazi are really popular and we sound like them, so thusly we will be really popular." That's where a lot of crap music comes from. ¶ Right now, I'm working on this article where I'm trying to narrow down

like 10 or 15 really good bands that inspired a ton of really shitty music. Take Jawbox: Jawbox has inspired a million bad bands. Or Slint—Jesus, I can't even listen to real Slint now because I'm so burnt out on fake Slint bands. ¶ Aside from punk rock, the first music I ever really liked was old Motown stuff. The first record I ever had was a 25 years of Motown record I stole from the public library. I was in the sixth grade. I don't listen to a lot of that stuff anymore, but with those old Motown records, you can't even doubt the sincerity there. Sure, they're just pop songs but when those people were saying "I'm going to die if you don't come back to me," you really thought they were going to die. Some rap music, like Gang Starr or Public Enemy, that shit is for real—they're not faking it.

Like when Guru from Gang Starr talks about getting caught at the airport with a hand gun, you know it's real. You know he was getting jacked in the baggage claim for real. [Laughs]

Totally man. Anybody with half a brain can

I've been so poor this year I haven't been able to buy records like I did last year. I can't really put together a top 10 list for this year because I probably only bought 10 records! But I've heard from some people that this was a bad year for music. What do you think?

Here's what we'll do: I'll list my most played out for 1999. What would be an interview with me without some talking shit? [Laughs] I want to be mentioned in the letters section at least once! [Laughs] Ok, played out for '99 number one: half-spazzcore-half-goth-can't-really-make-out-any-discernable-melody-or-lyrics-everybody-rolling-on-the-floor-everybody-wearing-suits. Bad. Out for '99: doing the fake Make-Up thing. I've seen a little bit of that going on and if that's the future, it's a bleak one. Next: people who are still in bands that sound like fourth or fifth generation bad riot girl rock. Everybody has to start somewhere, I know this, and I can't blame these people for not being down with Olympia back in like '92, but I have this thing about how I want women to be really good songwriters so that people can't keep saying,

pedestal by saying, "Oh, they aren't doing what I'm doing, aren't I cute and brave." No, I'm lucky that I've been doing this long enough that people kind of know what my deal is. A lot of people really think you have to give people good reviews in order to get ads, but that's not true, I see so much of that and it really bums me out because I don't think enough people around me are making a serious critique of art. ¶ There are some zines that really do a good job though, *Held Like Sound* and *Torpedo Dialogues* I feel totally have honest reviewers. There's a fanzine called *Skyscraper* out of Utah somewhere that I think is going to be totally genius in about a year. But there are so many zines out there full of people being really passionate about really tired topics. Topics like Ben Weasel or Larry Livermore or is Rancid selling out or is emo selling out—just really tired things. ¶ Another problem with fanzines is that there aren't enough women doing fanzines about anything, period. ¶ Also, I'm tired of punk rock being ugly. I'm into aesthetics. Punk rock has been so ugly and illiterate forever. ¶ I'm also tired of people who

THAT ARE AFRAID TO BE CRITICAL OF THINGS.

draw some similarities between really honest rap—rap that's not filled with my dicks this big bravado—and punk rock. I think it's a pretty easy line to draw and I'm surprised that more punk people I know don't cross over into listening to rap more than just as a joke, or more than owning one Cypress Hill record or one Ice Cube record.

I like the fact that people will read this and think Gang Starr is the newest thing to be into.

Oh man, I know I'm in trouble—I always have to do these year end "best of" lists and I don't think it will be number one, but definitely in the top three is Madonna's new record *Ray of Light*. I bought it, thought it was horrible for six months, saw the documentary on VH-1, went back to the record and now it practically makes me cry. I feel like such a cheezeball. That and the new Gang Starr album are definitely on the "best of" list. There's some punk rock stuff in there too.

"Well, they're women" and so forth. Also out: bad minimalism—fake Shellac, fake Slint, fake June of 44 stuff. Living in Chicago you'd think people would know by now that Touch and Go isn't going to sign you just because you sound like an amalgamation of their three top selling artists! It's bad news dude. And the number one criminal offender: anything that sounds like The Promise Ring that isn't The Promise Ring.

There are a lot of guilty parties in that lot.

Oh my God, all of Pennsylvania should be hung! If you're in rural Pennsylvania, there's a nine to one chance that you're in a band that has at least three songs that sound like something off the Ring's first album.

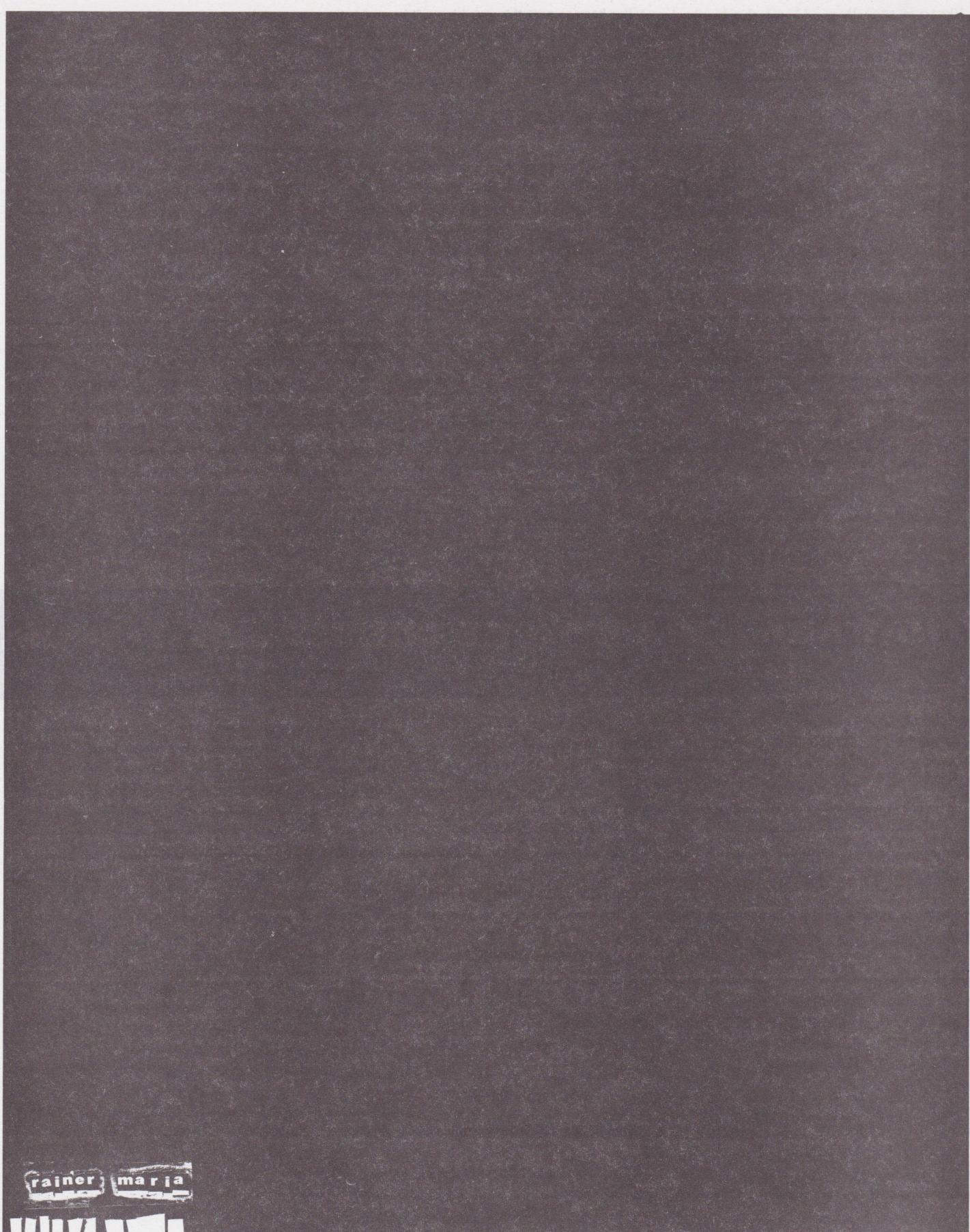
What is your list of criminal offenses for zines?

What I'm usually appalled by is people that are afraid to be critical of things. I'm not trying to put my own zine on some kind of

really fashion themselves as music critics, like they write for Rolling Stone or something—people who take themselves and their opinions super serious. There's a huge bunch of people not really saying anything new and just saying the things they're supposed to say and having the opinions they think they're supposed to have. You're supposed to think Ben Weasel is stupid and you're supposed to be angry at certain record labels. That is so tired. I'm so tired of reading that stuff. I also can't stand editorials about how sorry they are the magazine is late in coming out when you know nobody but their friends even knew that. I hate that too.

To close: Who's your favorite Stars Wars character?

That is the stupidest question I've ever heard! ☺



I'll say right off that the swashbuckling quiet storm that is Rainer Maria were three of the nicest people I've ever interviewed. Something automatically puts you at ease when you watch them play or engage them in conversation. There's a tangible humanness to Kyle, Caitlyn, and Bill, and thusly to Rainer Maria. Completely accessible (but not in a lowest common denominator style) as people and as a band, they play their self-taught brand of rock 'n' roll to please their artistic sides—all the while pleasing ever-increasing numbers of fans. We sat in their van outside the ever aromatic Fireside Bowl and talked pirates, the gong show, and the other pressing issues in their lives. Tally ho young buccaneers.

By Josh Hooten

Why would pirates fly the Jolly Roger if everyone knows what it means? Wouldn't it make ships that they wanted to pillage run off and alert some sort of authority?

Bill: Well they seem to be pretty big egoists, so maybe it was part of the subculture—like a pride thing.

Claiming your colors, so to speak?

Bill: Exactly.

Caitlyn: I think if a ship was coming toward you in those days, you pretty much knew it was something battle-oriented or there was something desperate going on, so it wouldn't really matter.

Caitlyn: Pirates are always portrayed as so fierce and the merchants as so wimpy, so I guess there was nothing they could do about being boarded or being attacked in the first place. There was an air of impending doom.

That's what the woman at the Evanston Public Library information desk was getting at. She said that Pirates were masters of psychology—they did a lot of coursework at a variety of Ivy League schools [laughs]. Most times, according to the woman, they wouldn't actually have to attack because the people would be so afraid they would just give the pirates what they wanted. I figured the pirates had faster ships too.

Caitlyn: Well, they weren't laden down with all the booty yet.

Good point. I guess the getaway would be a different story than the attack.

Kyle: Did you say booty? [Laughs]

That's all my questions, thanks guys. [Laughs] ¶ All right, I want to talk about the literary influence in what you do.

Kyle: I suppose we've always been interested in writing unambiguous lyrics that still work on a variety of levels. For instance, the first song on our album, *Tinfoil*, we tried to write lyrics that depended on the point of view from which you looked at them. You can understand them as addressing a variety of subjects—like two or three subjects in that one song. I think certainly that's something that has come from conscientious reading and writing over a long period of time. I was writing long before I was doing anything musical. I grew up being told that I had no musical talent. I couldn't sing. I started out playing drums and everyone assumes that percussionists are tone deaf.

Caitlyn: I only started playing an instrument when this band began, but I had been writing all along—that's what I went to school for. I think first and foremost our background is writing, not music.

Kyle: I think the lyrics for the album *Past, Worn, Searching* were lyrics that were very grounded in literature. A lot of the ideas that we were exploring were ideas that we had worked out previously in poetry or in some other journalistic form. Now the focus has shifted and we see ourselves first and foremost as musicians. That's not to say that the lyrics get less attention, but in terms of the forms that we're borrowing from, it's a less literary, less academic form. We're using a lot more of the so-called "traditional" lyric. Direct, with a lot more that's implicit and a lot less swimming about in the clouds. It's possible to very directly say what you mean because having music to go along with your words allows that to happen so much more effectively. You can't say "I miss you" in a poem without a ton of context to make that work, whereas you can say it in your song and if you place it correctly and you sing it correctly you can get away with it.

I'm guessing most bands don't go at it that way. I think most people probably play instruments, then start bands and need lyrics so they become writers by default. I think that might be why most lyrics I hear are really terrible. They may work within the context of a song, but if you just sit there and read the lyrics, they're just not very good. I'm assuming you're approach is the reverse of most people. ¶ Since your lyrics and your band reference literature so strongly, I'm curious what your favorite books or writers are?

Caitlyn: I just read this awesome book called *My Life As A Boy* by Kim Chernan who's also written several books about eating disorders and women's studies subjects. That's how I came across them, in my studies at school.

Bill: I like the classics. In school I was a philosophy/political science double major so I did a lot of heavy political and philosophical reading. But I'm also into light reading, like really trashy biographies and autobiographies. I just finished reading a screenplay about the life of Chuck Berry, the Gong Show guy. [Laughs] I was so into that. He created *The Dating Game*, and *The Newlywed Game*, and at the same time that these were going on, he was an agent for the CIA. He freelanced for the CIA and killed 33 people.

No he didn't!

Bill: Yes he did. He created *The Dating Game* and it wasn't doing so well, so they decided to offer bigger prizes to try to get a prime daytime slot. They started offering the winners trips all over the world and the CIA agent that Chuck was dealing with thought that was a golden opportunity so the CIA started paying for the trips. Chuck would go with them and off people while he was there. They had trips to like West Germany and Chuck would go over the border and kill people. The first time they did this he went over the border into East Germany and when he was coming back, one of the contestants saw him climbing over the wall so Chuck had to kill him—he killed the contestant!

That's absurd!

There are a series of accidents that have led us to the sound that we have.

I want to do work. I don't care if anybody else talks about it, I just want to do work.

Bill: It's going to be a Warner Brothers movie in about a year and a half, so look for it.

Holy shit.

Bill: The book it's based on is out of print right now, it's called *Confessions of a Dangerous Mind*. It's really enthralling because it's this real life James Bond thing. There was this double agent that he was having sexual relations with and of course he didn't know she was a double agent so in the end he had to kill her.

That is the most absurd thing I've ever heard in my life. [Laughs] Are you making this up?

Bill: I'm not so bored that I would sit around and think these things up about Chuck Berry. It's all true. The CIA watched him for like 10 years and they found out he had an extra Y chromosome so he was an ideal candidate. Having an extra Y chromosome supposedly means you're more aggressive. His mother had an affair with a serial killer.

God, that is so bizarre. I totally can't concentrate now. [Laughs] All right, back on track. I'm curious about style vs. substance—how the content of what you do is related to the form it takes. It's sort of the age-old modernist idea of form following function I'm curious about, since you were writing before you were playing, how your style came about, how you came into sound.

Kyle: Inevitably there has to be some separation between the lyrical content and the form the music takes. I don't strum a chord and have a word that goes with it, then strum another chord and have four more words to go with that. It can't be a simultaneous process. Either I've got a page of words and then I find chords or rhythms that suit them or we have music that invokes a certain mood and then you try to find a linguistic expression for it. That's sort of a separate question to me from why our band now sounds the way it sounds. ¶ There are a series of accidents that have led us to the sound that we have. We're all self-taught musicians—we've had formal training on other instruments but not on the ones we're playing in this band. I played the drums, and then I picked up the bass guitar and then there was a guitar

laying around the house. I picked that up and made my roommate teach me a few chords. I found that I wasn't able to muffle the strings that I didn't want to hit. So after Rainer

Maria wrote our first four or five songs—at which time I had been seriously playing guitar for six or eight months—I found I was D tuning my guitars so that the top strings were open because I couldn't muffle them with my hand. I found I was also changing the guitar tuning so that I could play chords that I liked but I couldn't reach with my hand. The fact that I couldn't play guitar meant that we began writing songs with more open tuning. Plus, since we only had one guitar, we needed it to take up a wider tonal range. So in playing my instrument, it was a combination of not being able to play guitar and also wanting it to go from really low lows to really high highs.

Caitlyn: Well I am going to echo some of your sentiments in that my bass playing was totally reliant on me learning how to play it, because in the beginning I didn't know how. So I was just holding notes longer and doing everything by ear—trying to make a melody line instead of a rhythm. It's like Kyle said: a lot of accidents got us to where we are.

Kyle: Now that we can play our instruments and we're comfortable with them, the accidents that we started with are now things that we favor. Now it's a stylistic decision. That's not to say I dumb down the guitar parts—if anything they get more complicated—but I still favor these open, very expansive chords.

Bill: And the bass often carries the melody and the rhythm at the same time. Caitlyn and I work really well off of each other when we're writing together.

What do you think you'd be doing if you had never started playing music?

Caitlyn: Hopefully I would have still met Kyle because he's definitely been the most encouraging person I've ever known.

Bill: Me too, definitely. When I met Kyle, it was five years ago. He was doing shows in Madison and I was going to shows in Madison. Kyle was in this band Ezra Pound playing drums and singing but wanted to concentrate more on just singing. I was toying around with playing drums, so he asked me to play drums and I figured, "Whatever,

it might be fun." Since then, it's really opened up new windows for me. If I hadn't met Kyle I don't think I'd be as ambitious as I am now.

Kyle: I thank god I didn't go on to grad school. I've been very happy not having gone on to grad school yet and I don't know if I plan to ever. I would probably have been trying to eek the most out of life in a context in which you don't have a stage to do it on—to act like an idiot publicly and have people like it.

Bill: I came from a working class family. Nobody in my family had ever gone to college I was the first one. I'm sure I probably would have grasped onto anything I could have found after school and settled down and be content with working some nine to five job. Like I would have gone to grad school and been content to find some teaching position somewhere. I definitely don't think that's in my future now. I kind of hit a fork in the road and I went toward Kyle as opposed to the other.

Kyle: You guys are just trying to embarrass me now. [Laughs]

So do you never see yourself going back in that direction at some point?

Bill: Maybe in the distant future, I don't know. I don't think so though.

Kyle: In school you study about all the great things that everyone else did and then after you're tenured and worked really hard and sucked everybody's ass, you finally get to write your books and hopefully people will like you.

Caitlyn: Why would you want to wait that long?

Kyle: Yeah. Our friend Kevin always says, "Start out where you want to end up." That's maybe the only good advice I've ever gotten in my life. I don't want to talk about everybody else's work for the rest of my life anymore. I realized that at some point in school, I want to do work. I don't care if anybody else talks about it. I just want to do work. I feel like that's what we're doing now. ☺

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Issue 15

ISSUE

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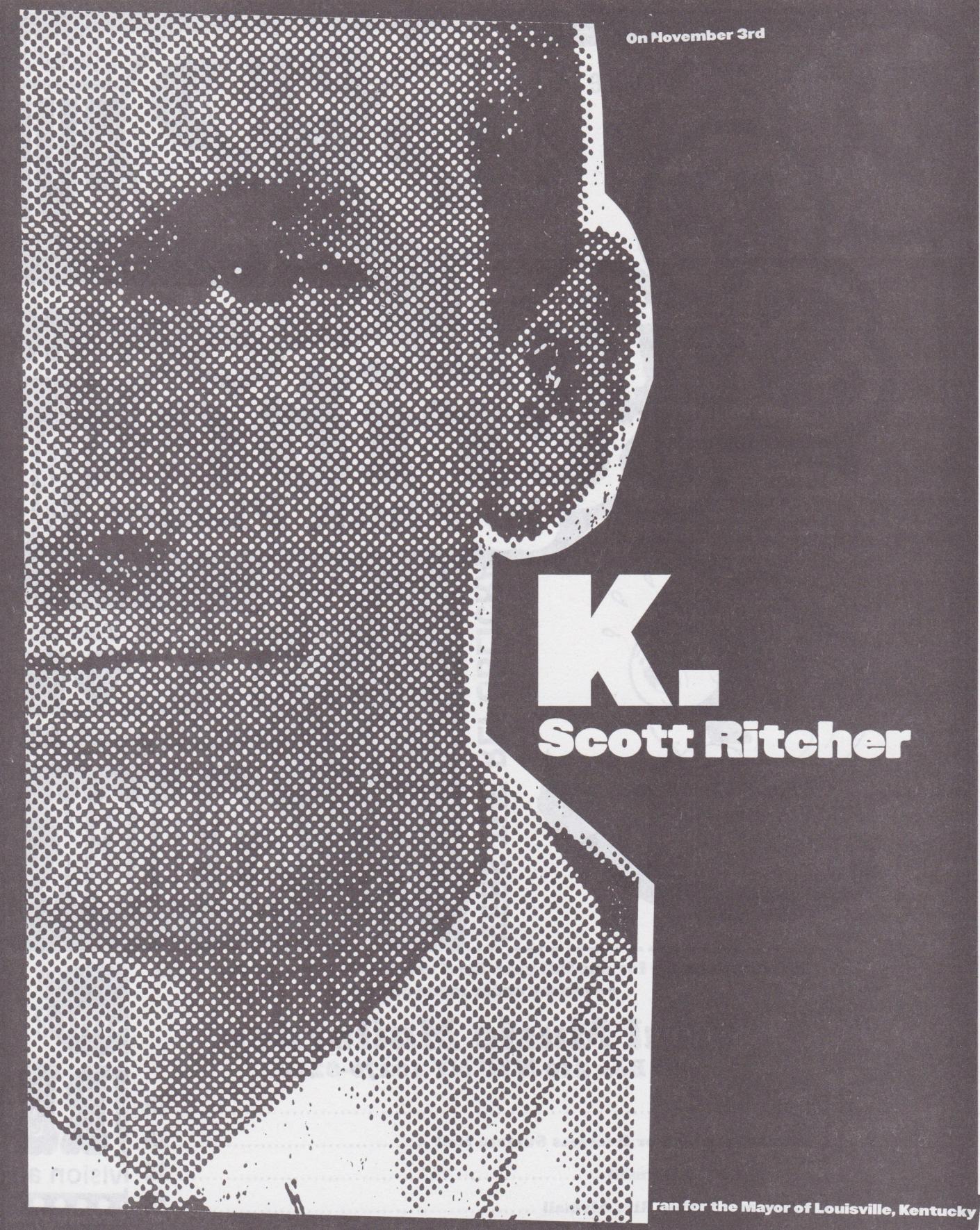
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On November 3rd

K.
Scott Ritcher

ran for the Mayor of Louisville, Kentucky

He lost.

THE MANY HATS K SCOTT RITCHER WEARS

could easily be spread out over several people—any of whom would be impressive in their own right.

There's Scott, part owner of Initial Records

Distribution; Scott, graphic designer of several records, catalogs, T-shirts and the strikingly unique K Composite fanzine; Scott, author of a ridiculously thorough and detailed history of his own (now defunct) record label, Slamdek; Scott, leader of the inventive and charismatic band The Metroschifter—who even made a country album; and most recently, K Scott Ritcher, Reform Party Mayoral candidate.

¶ K Scott Ritcher's mayoral run is perhaps his most impressive achievement in a series of impressive achievements. Running a completely DIY campaign (Scott refused to spend more than \$1,000 on the entire campaign), and sticking very closely to punk rock ideals, Scott was able to capture 2% of the vote and end third out of four candidates. While he doesn't plan to run again ("At least not until I'm a lot older," he says), his campaign turned heads in Louisville and hopefully will inspire other punks to run for office.

Interview by Ryan Downey

What has prompted your mayoral candidacy?

In Louisville, we've had the same mayor for three terms. He's been overwhelmingly popular and re-elected by 95 percent every time. He's just an all around great guy who has been widely supported and has been able to accomplish a lot as mayor of our city. But this year is the end: There's a term limit on Louisville mayors and he can't run again. Louisville is basically a Democrat town—there hasn't been a Republican mayor of Louisville in decades. The two Democrats that were up were this one guy Tom Owen, who is a Louisville historian and an alderman. He's basically a genius—the perfect guy for the job. He's a fair, honest and normal guy. He uses public transportation when he rides to work or rides his bicycle. He unfortunately lost the primary in May by about 1,500 votes to the other guy who is a complete moron, a jack-ass, and a career politician. He's more Republican than the Republican running! He was actually quoted in the newspaper saying that one of the reasons he wants to be mayor is to fatten his pension. A lot of people are angry that he's the shoe-in for the race. ¶ It had me pretty angry 'cause I didn't feel like there was anyone I would like to vote for. The Reform Party Of Kentucky convention was in July and I decided that I would throw in my name as a nominee for the

Reform Party candidate for mayor. The convention accepted my nomination and was able to get ballot access—this is the first year that the Reform Party is eligible nationwide to nominate candidates by convention rather than collecting signatures and all of those other rules the Democrats and Republicans have been so skilled at putting in place over the past few decades in order to weed out the little guy. So, in so many words, that's how I got into the race. I didn't feel there was anybody I wanted to vote for and I would like to see a Reform Party candidate on the ballot in Louisville and this is my way to achieve both of those goals.

Realistically, how much of a chance do you have of winning? Is that even the goal?

I don't think it's the goal and I don't think I have a realistic chance of winning. But I do think I have a pretty good chance at getting a healthy percentage of the vote. ¶ The local media has been very fair and open. The local television stations, newspapers and radio stations have been really good about including all four candidates. Every Sunday in the local paper there's a candidate forum where they ask all of the candidates the same question and I've been included for the past six weeks. It's been easier than I thought to get my message about what I'm for and what the Reform Party is about out there. From what people tell me, it looks like I might do a lot better than I think I will. I think my goal is maybe two percent—just to make a good enough showing to be on the election night results on TV.

Have you ever gotten to meet or talk with Ross Perot?

At the Reform Party National Convention in Atlanta I shook his hand. It was after a speech. I didn't get to talk to him or anything. After his speech, everybody rushed the stage to shake his hand. I was like, "Oh, I'm going! I'm going!" People in the Reform Party kind of feel religiously about Ross. It's a pretty great thrill to hear him speak. I actually saw him speak about six years ago when he was running for President in '92.

I gotta ask you, while we're talking about politics, what your take on the whole Clinton/Lewinsky mess is.

I think that regardless of the circumstances, our president has embarrassed himself and his family and furthermore, the country. There's currently a huge world economic crisis that has pretty much affected everybody but our country so far. That's going to take a huge degree of leadership and trust from Americans and people around the world to not only avert America from being involved, but to in some ways assist the rest of the world in bouncing back. And if there's a man at the top of the world who you can't look at without laughing and you can't trust and every time he says something you think, "Hmph, right," that's pretty much putting the entire world at risk to protect one man's quest to hold on to power. I think that's a very dangerous position for the world to be in. If he cared about America and if he had respect for the office of President, he would step down. That's how I feel about the situation.

What if I said, "I bet he's just running for mayor to sell records!"

Hopefully nobody thinks that. But if they do, hopefully they'll buy our records! [Laughs] I think the only people who are aware that I'm running for mayor are people who live in Louisville and Louisville has always been really good place for Metroschifter as far as sales and the number of people who come to our shows, so I don't think we need that assistance. I think running for mayor is a logical progression from the things that I've done. If anybody's thinking about doing it, it's interesting and very educational and sometimes fun, but for the most part it's so time consuming and such a headache. You have to know so much about so many different things that anybody might ask you about, it's certainly not worth doing for the attention [laughs].

So while you've entered the political arena, you're still a punk rocker at heart. I want to talk about some of the many punk projects you're involved in. How did you first hook up with Initial Records?

When I was still running my label, Slamdek, and Andy Rich of Initial was still living in Detroit, I did the layout with Duncan Barlow for the Guilt Synesthesia ten inch. That's where it started. After that, I did designs for other Initial bands. I also sold Initial stuff



through Slamdek and Andy would sell Slamdek stuff through Initial. We traded a lot of records and sold each other's stuff. I got more involved later as I got to know Andy. He lived in Louisville for a summer before he actually moved here for good and I worked with him then making catalogs and advertisements. When Slamdek went out of business in 1995, our two labels were collaborating on the Falling Forward/ Metroschifter seven inch—it was going to be a split label release. He took that over and I started writing the book about Slamdek about a year after that. He said that if I couldn't afford to put it out—which I couldn't [laughs]—he'd help me out with the printing of the book. He eventually paid for all of it and put out my book.

How many of those books have you sold?

We only printed 1,500 and all of those went within a few months. We're actually in the process of getting more made right now—it's amazingly expensive! We didn't figure on how expensive or involved it was going to be. Imagine the amount of typos you might find on a lyric sheet of a record. Now multiply that by 223 pages! Then there's the binding and shipping and all that kind of stuff. We didn't charge enough for it, so it's difficult to get it reprinted right away. It's been out of print for about a year, but we'll have more this Christmas. ¶ But going back to Initial, Andy moved here at the end of '96 and we went into business together with Initial Distribution. Since then, I've designed all of the Initial catalogs and most of the Initial ads and many of the releases.

What I respect about Initial is that the label has built up an identity of its own.

That's kind of what we were hoping to achieve a couple of years ago when I got involved. We wanted to emulate a lot of companies that have a total brand identity. I think we kind of accidentally achieved it. We were hoping to do it, but we didn't realize that the label and distribution company would have its own personality and "fans," so to speak.

It's good to establish that with a label. There was a time when you could buy something on Touch & Go, Dischord or even Revelation because of the logo—you knew what to expect and you knew it was going to be of a certain quality. It's really difficult for labels to maintain that as they go on.

I kind of feel that way about Initial. Andy puts out quality releases and they're all pretty diverse—you've got Ink & Dagger, Boy Sets Fire and Elliott and Despair all putting out records on the same label—that's a pretty wide scope.

So what about your band, the Metroschifter. Every few months I'll hear that the band has broken up. What gives?

I often hear that we've broken up. We've had a lot of member changes in the past. People hear, "Oh, that guy's not playing with them anymore" and by the time that gets around, it becomes, "Oh, they're not together anymore." Metroschifter started out as a side project. Pat [McClimans, bass] and [departed second guitarist] Chad [Castetter] were still in Endpoint and Mario [Rubalcaba] was in Clikitat Ikatowi. We all lived far apart. We didn't really expect anything to come out of it. On holidays or when we were all in town, we would get together and record something. That was good and we could go on tour every once in a while, but it wasn't really feasible as a full-time band. Mario lived in California, and the rest of us were in Indiana and Kentucky. There were times where there would be six or seven months where we wouldn't do anything. Then we would get together, practice two or three times and record a new album. We did a couple of tours without Mario—we used substitute drummers—it took a while for us to find a vision of what we wanted to do with the band. We played some shows without Mario that were really bad and we thought, "Maybe we should just stick to the lineup that was on the first album and if we can't do it then just forget it." It took us a while to write and record new songs with a different drummer. We never recorded with a different drummer until last year—about three years into the band. Then with Chris Reinstatler, things kind of clicked again and we've begun to take it in a new way. Metroschifter can be a full time project even though we're all busy with other things. We can try different types of stuff again. We did the all-acoustic album. Lately we've gotten more into sequencing and drum machines and other instrumentation.

So is that the future of Metroschifter? What project are you working on now?

Right now, we're working on an album that has other bands playing brand new, unreleased songs by us. All new songs. We've been writing the songs on that. Eight of the bands have their songs so far and a few of them have already recorded them. We asked 20 bands to do it thinking that maybe ten of them would, and 19 said "Yeah, we'd love to do it!"

With all this stuff going on, what's a typical day like for you?

[Laughs] Luckily, most of things I'm involved in don't overlap too much. Metroschifter goes in phases—we'll play a bunch of shows all at one time and record a record around the same time and then we really won't do anything for like six months. When I'm doing Metroschifter, it's pretty much the only thing I can do. Running for Mayor has been insane, because it's a whole new slew of things that have to be scheduled during my normal work day that overlap everything else. I can't wait 'til November third, when it's all over just to see how I did. Just to be like, "Wow, I've always wanted to run for mayor of Louisville and now I've done it."

You do so many things. Is your mind constantly thinking about the next project?

Uh huh! And it sucks! [laughs] I get bored with stuff so easily. I think that's probably why I'm into so many things. ☺

K SCOTT RITCHER ON THE ISSUES

Taken from his mayoral candidacy platform pamphlet

Youth Rights

The Louisville youth curfew seems to have done less to reduce crime than it has done to create an image of Louisville—in the eyes of the young—as a city which treats them as though they are not trusted or appreciated as equal citizens. I've spoken with some kids who can't wait to move away to college in another city. We need to entice Louisville's kids to grow into Louisville's adults, and then concentrate on bringing in new people.

Aside from the bad impression it gives off, the curfew itself is completely hollow. If a police officer finds a kid out after curfew, the office cannot give the child a ride home or even touch them, but only tell them to go home. The curfew is one percent backbone and 99 percent PR and it must go.

Gay & Lesbian Rights

Another group of Louisvillians who are being treated as less-than equal citizens are those of differing sexual orientations. Right now in Louisville, it is perfectly legal to deny an apartment, a job or a promotion to a qualified applicant because they are not heterosexual. This practice sends a signal to people inside and outside of Louisville that we are a city which tolerates discrimination.

The Fairness Ordinance is what America is all about. Even though you may not agree with what someone else believes, everyone is entitled to their own beliefs just as much as you are entitled to yours. And as Americans, we are all entitled to the same rights and privileges, regardless of our beliefs. The Fairness Ordinance must be clear that it guarantees equal rights to all citizens regardless of sexual orientation.

Political Reform

How many jobs have you had in which you could give yourself a pay raise? Has your boss ever allowed you to increase your own health care benefits or fatten your own retirement plan? Has it ever been OK for you to accept free gifts, trips and dinners from people who want you to run your business a certain way? Is it acceptable to use all the connections you make to influence other decisions for your own benefit, even if they are against the best interests of the company? ... No way. None of these things happen in real life, unless, of course, you are a government official in the United States!

We need to do our best to combat corruption on a local level and return the highest ethical standards and accountability to our city government. In fact, I want to take more power out of the hands of government officials and give it back to the citizens they represent.

I suggest that any time changes or adaptations are proposed to local laws, taxes, programs, or spending, the public will be educated in a televised debate-style broadcast which would illustrate the pros and cons of any propositions. Then, after the program has aired several times over a week-long period, Louisville's voters would decide electronically, via telephone, over a 72-hour period, whether or not these adaptations would take place.

With this system, Louisville could become known as a city which leads by example.

Volunteerism

I don't think one or two hours of community service each year is going to hurt anybody. I suggest that every able-bodied resident of Louisville between the ages of 18 and 55 be required to complete at least one hour of community service in every calendar year. The benefit to the entire community would be an influx of about 200,000 hours of productive work every year. That's over 500 folks each day doing something for the betterment of everyone. It could be any type of work from separating recyclables to trimming the grass around sign posts, to cleaning graffiti off of walls to greeting people at a visitor's center, to standing on a street corner and waving at passing motorists, to singing songs at a nursing home, to picking up garbage off the streets to working in a soup kitchen. The possibilities are endless. All activities would in some way benefit the city, either in appearance, efficiency or morale. Who knows, you might even enjoy it and decide to go into a new field of work.

The Environment

Another small step we could take to advance the quality of life in Louisville is to replace all public garbage cans with divided recycling receptacles. Additionally, there is no reason that any home or business in this day and time should still be throwing away recyclable garbage. I propose requiring separation of recyclables at all residences and businesses and fining those who don't participate. These ideas should have been in place decades ago. Recyclable garbage should be treated with the same respect as our other natural resources.

I also want to develop a plan to make all new street lights and illuminated signs operate on solar power. Street lights and signs sit outside all day long under the biggest power source anywhere—the sun. Why not utilize that power in the city the same way it is utilized for flashing arrow signs on our interstate highways? Like every other investment, it costs more in the beginning, but the payoff is ultimately worth the sacrifice. Solar power is the cleanest, most renewable and, in the long term, least expensive form of energy available. Louisville should take the lead in implementing widespread use of solar energy systems.

Crime

The first step in solving any problem is determining what causes it. I think it's com-

mon sense that the vast majority of all crimes are committed as a result of need. Generally, people who are self-sufficient and can provide for themselves and their family do not commit acts of theft or violence against their fellow citizens. For this reason, I think economic inequality is the single most crucial problem in Louisville. It's all about money. Basically, I believe if we can eliminate the need, the effect it will have on crime will be exponential.

When someone asks me, "What would you do about crime?" My simple answer is, "Pay the teachers more." That answer traces crime back to one of its earliest points of development.

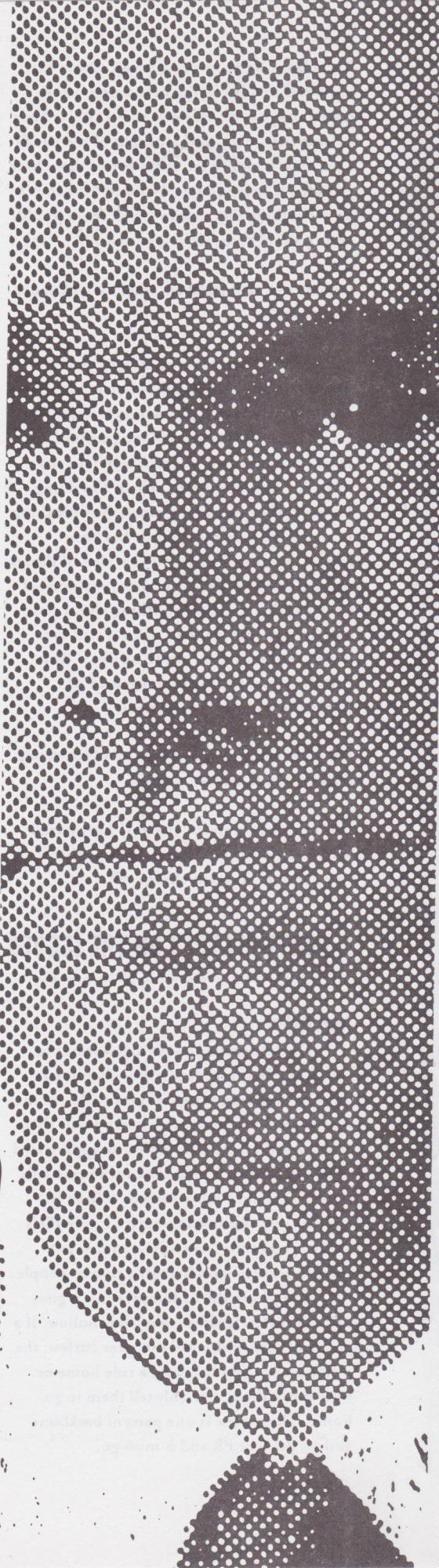
If a kid gets a good education, can read and write, can determine the difference between right and wrong, has respect for the people and places around him, and has an awareness of the world outside of his neighborhood, then chances are that kid will have a pretty good shot at being able to develop his own life the way he wants. He can pursue a higher education, or at least get a job in which he can earn a respectable wage.

On the other hand, if that same kid doesn't get a good education, he might now have the same respect for others and their property. It may be much easier for him to get discouraged and try to take an easy way out, by stealing from people, destroying things or getting mixed up with drugs.

Just like crime and violence, drug dealing and personal drug use often grow out of desperation and need. The vast majority of all intelligent, well-educated people who live comfortable, satisfying, self-sufficient lives will never have the desire to sell or use drugs.

Education

I propose not only an across-the-board pay raise for all public school teachers, but I also think it's imperative that we begin fueling the most education money per capita into school in neighborhoods with the lowest income per capita. This way, we'd effectively be giving the best education to the poorest people. This plan would be an investment in the future of Louisville on so many different levels. It would be a priceless advantage for the students and a groundbreaking step in crime prevention. ☺



20 QUESTIONS WITH THE ZINE EVENTIDE

1. How long have you been doing your zine and what issue are you on?

I started working on issue one during my second semester at college, and it came back from the printer in late June, 1996. At the time that I'm writing this, I'm working on issue five. Issue four should have come out around Christmas.

2. How long do you plan on doing it for?

I'm planning on doing it for as long as the enjoyment of doing it outweighs the work and money that is put into it.

3. What would cause you to quit?

Waking up one day and realizing that there's nothing out there in terms of music, film, or writing that inspires me enough to put it in a zine.

4. How do you distribute your zine?

Since issue three, Eventide's been free in person, so a lot have been given out at stores in the New Jersey/New York area and at shows. I've also found a bunch of good, reliable distributors including Lumberjack, No Idea, Secluded Universe, and Bottleneck.

5. Why is your zine called what it's called?

I was thinking about names for a while. I was kicking around "Madlands" and "Sleep Well" for a bit, but neither one really fit what I wanted to do with it. A lot of my memories of my later years in high school, after I started driving, involved me getting out of school at around five o'clock (I was in a lot of clubs that met after school). The parking lot was next to the soccer fields, which were in turn next to the Garden State Parkway. Often when I'd be walking to my car, I'd see the sunset over this landscape and that has been an image that has stayed with me. I started looking at synonyms for "twilight" and found "eventide" and that seemed to work. Yeah, it's a bit stereotypically "emo," but it's worked so far.

6. In order of importance, what would you rank as the three main subjects you cover?

Art (be it music, film, or writing), personal writing and trying to understand interpersonal relationships (be it those of a romantic nature, friendships, or the connections between people in a band).

7. What's the hardest part about doing your zine?

Coordinating schedules. Especially since I'm not doing the layout anymore, it's tougher to get everyone involved with the layout in the same place.

8. What's the most rewarding?

Having the zine in my hands to give to people.

9. Are you doing your zine for the free records?

Not really. A lot of the music that I've been listening to now and enjoying has been stuff that I've bought on my own. There are certain labels whose packages I wait for with a lot of anticipation, though.

10. Was it weird to interview Bill Clinton with Monica Lewinsky right there in the oval office and you smoking a cigar?

If I had only known...

11. What was the best and worst interview you've ever done?

The best would probably be a tie; Scott and I interviewed Jason from the Promise Ring in September 1997, and that was a lot of fun. I recently interviewed Dan and Jason from Kid Dynamite, and again, that was one of those interviews where everything just seemed to click. Worst? Based on some things I've heard about the band, I regret having interviewed a member of Ignite. Plus, it wasn't a particularly rewarding interview on its own merits.

12. Quote your favorite thing ever said in the pages of your zine.

I was interviewing Endeavor, and Kevin blurted out, "Fuck the Pope."

13. Do you write everything yourself? If so, why? If not, how do you find other writers?

With issues one and two, I wrote everything except for some columns. By issue three, I decided that it would be better to bring in some more styles and viewpoints that it would make reading *Eventide* a more interesting experience. Some of the writers are friends of mine, or zine editors (like Ryan from *Hanging Like a Hex*) where we've each liked the work the other's done. Scott Shields, who edits the zine with me (for the most part), and I know each other from a few years ago, and we also run the label Your Best Guess together. Some, like Luke Janik, Martin Olson, Molly Templeton, Mike Burmeister, and Daphne Carr, I know from school. Others I met through correspondence. I've also worked with Daphne before on other music-oriented publications.

14. How is your zine produced?

The writers each write their pieces and interviews and send them to Scott and me as text files. For issue 4, the layout was done on various Macs. Luke may be doing some of the layout for the interviews that he did for issue five on a PC, he and Scott are discussing fonts to make sure that there's not that much of a difference in look. I set deadlines, talk to advertisers and try to sound somewhat like I know what I'm doing. Right now, we're trying to get *Eventide* on a more regular schedule.

15. Handwritten vs. Typewriter vs. Computer?

Some of the best zines are handwritten, like *Cometbus*. I've also seen good things done on a typewriter; I think you can use the eccentricities of a typewriter to give a piece a lot of character (there's a whole section of an issue of *Defy* that's a good example of this). For me though, the zines that made me want to do a zine were all done on a computer, so that influenced my decision to lay the zine out on a computer.

16. What other zines inspire you?

Initially, *Anti-Matter*, *Trustkill*, and *Rumpshaker* were the zines that made me want to start doing one of my own. Now, *Rumpshaker*, *Heartattack*, *Hit it or Quit It*, *Cometbus*, *Rocket Fuel*, *Second Nature*, *I Stand Alone*, *Hodgepodge*, *Status*, *Hanging Like a Hex*, *Punk Planet*, *Chickfactor*, and *Number Two*.

17. What is "selling out"?

Compromising your beliefs to get something that you don't need.

18. If you could live off of your zine, would you?

If I could do it without serious compromise, yes.

19. If you had a chance to interview someone who you most likely would never have a chance to talk to, who would it be?

UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, because I think it would be fascinating to talk to someone on that level of global politics.

20. Describe your dream interview (who, where, what setting).

Michael Stipe in Athens, Georgia. For as long as I can remember, I've been an REM fan.

Issue 4 of *Eventide* is \$3 ppd. in the US; issues 3 and 5 are \$2 ppd., and issues one and two are \$1 each. They're available from 225 Riveredge Road, Tinton Falls, NJ 07724. You can also email me at TobiasAC@aol.com, or go to the Web site at <http://eventide.home.ml.org/> that Luke set up. In case you're interested, bands in issue four include *Braid*, the *Spinanes*, *Logical Nonsense*, *Grade*, and many more. It's 168 pages long.

20 QUESTIONS WITH THE BAND THE HADES KICK

1. When did your band form?

January of 1998.

2. When will it break up?

When Aquarius is in the ninth house of Demeter.

3. What have you released so far?

One seven inch on Thick as Thieves and one seven inch cloven hoof of the Demigoddess Demeter.

4. Why do you play the music that you play?

We try to do what we can with what we have. Mostly we play music as a hobby and that is reflected in our style.

5. What is the weirdest thing that has ever happened at a show?

We played five songs consecutively, without having to tune at all.

6. What is the best show you've ever played?

Any show with the Trail of Dead or Paul Newman.

7. State your purpose.

Our main purpose is to have a good time. We try to create good, danceable music that everyone can have fun listening to.

8. What were the runner up names for the band?

The Ox of Mithras, Lightning of Klutlu.

9. How do you describe yourself to relatives who have no idea what you play?

We need not describe ourselves to the elders. Youngsters and elders alike attend our gatherings. Including one Jim Keikie.

10. How do you describe yourself to kids in the scene who haven't heard you?

It's kinda hard, this is the formulated description: The Hades Kick=the integral, from zero to one of x plus one divided by infinity plus two which equals the summation from zero to one the zeroth root of three. Which in itself equals ROCK!

11. What bands do you see as your contemporaries?

And You Will Know Us By the Trail of Dead, I Told Her Everything, Skatman Carothers, Paul Newman and Tune in Tokyo.

12. What is the antithesis of your band?

Bands who care less about music and more about money, notoriety and turnout.

13. Outside of music and bands, what influences you?

Geography, Geoscience, Shoes, Birds, our new Van, Golf and the '60s.

14. What is selling out?

Having a van that's automatic.

15. If you could make a living off your band, would you?

No, we really like working shitty jobs.

16. Where do you practice?

4321 Airport, Austin Texas.

17. If you could play on a four-band bill, with any bands that have ever existed, who would you play with and what order would they play?

We would open and then the Meters would play, followed by Buddy Rich, Frank Zappa and ending with The Band. That makes five, but we'd cancel if that was too many bands.

18. What goals do you have as a band?

To create interesting music that people have a good time listening to.

19. What makes for a good show?

Jason Ward doing sound, Mike Flannery Booking the show and FUN!

20. If you were to cover a song (that you don't already) what would it be?

"Peaches en Regalia" by Frank Zappa.

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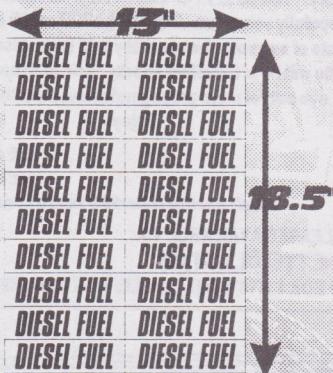
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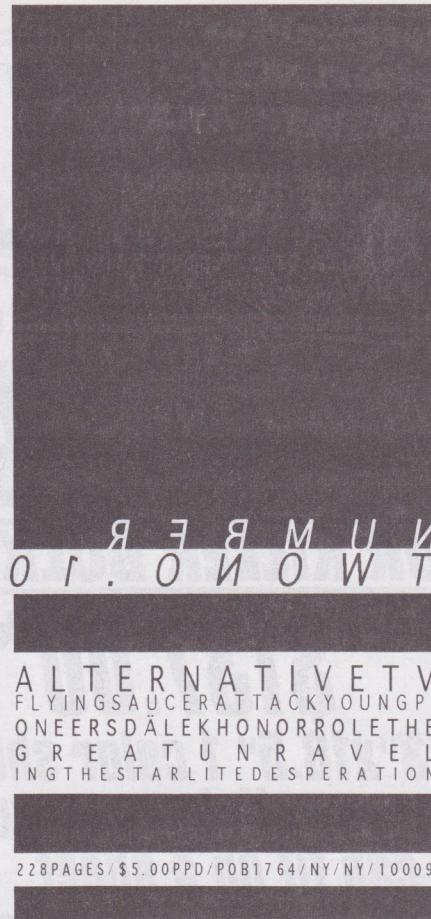
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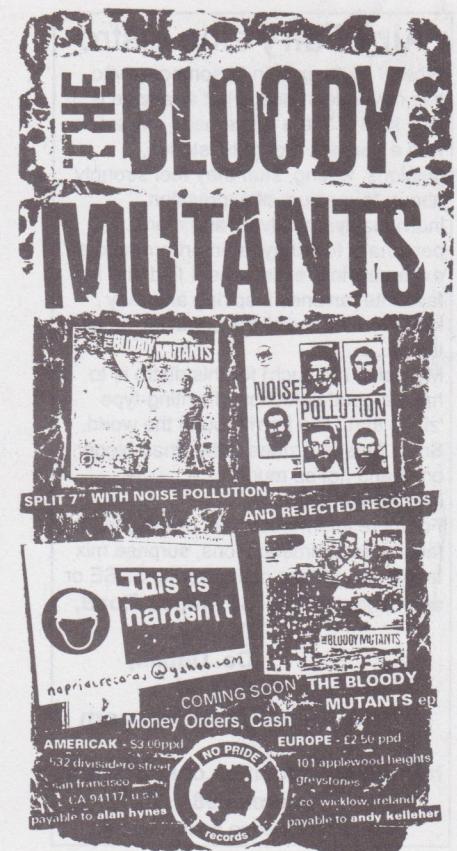
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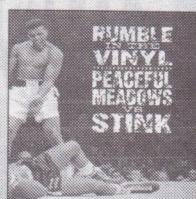
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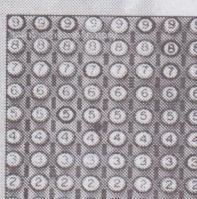
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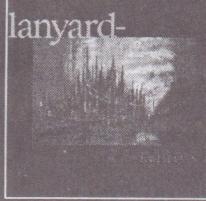
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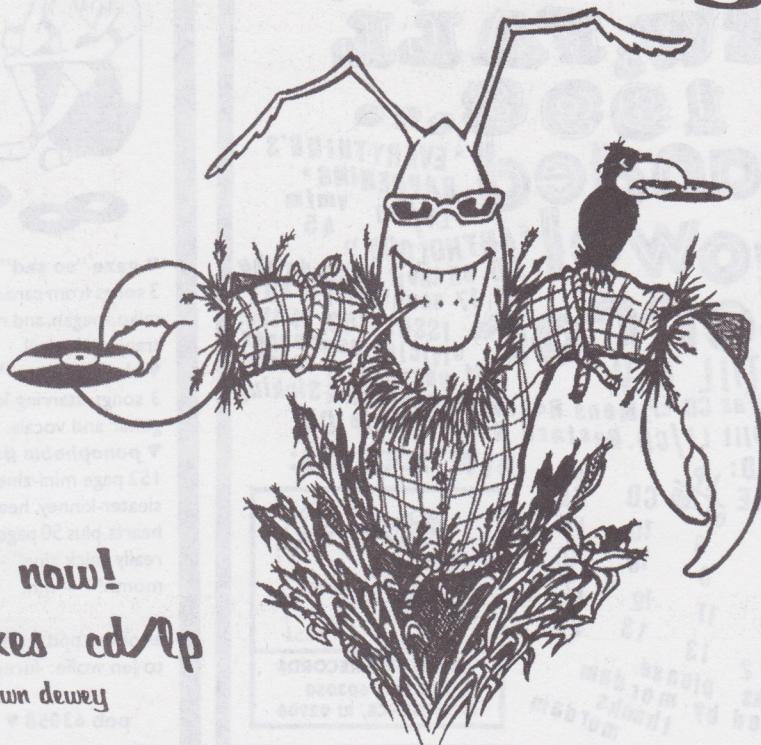
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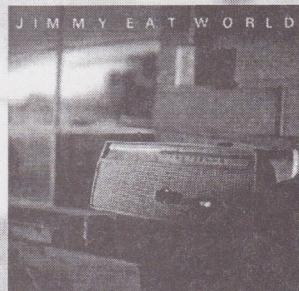
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Norm Arenas

1. Mark Hollis s/t (Polydor UK)
I'd probably still think Talk Talk were amazing, even if they never morphed into the missing link between new wave and post-rock. Key songwriter Mark Hollis returns with an eclectic mix of orchestral pop and ambient folk music that further pushes the envelope.

2. Refused *The Shape Of Punk To Come* (Burning Heart)

This album quite simply broke new ground in the downtrodden hardcore genre with a few good ideas and a hell of a lot of time in the studio: Standup bass, sampling, sporadic techno, jazz, cellos, and an anarchist vibe all manage to permeate the record without feeling awkward. Could be my favorite hardcore album of the decade—no lie.

3. Mineral *End Serenading* (Crank!)
This year's big surprise. Forget the soft-to-loud dynamic that lazy critics used to compare Mineral with a particular Northwestern band; the only distortion you'll hear on this record is the one from your speakers when you're playing it too loud.

4. Lords of Chaos by Michael Moynihan (Feral House)

This book's got everything: Murder, church burning, suicide, and plenty of photos of your favorite Norwegian Black Metalists in a wide assortment of artillery and corpsepaint.

5. Elliott Smith *XO* (Dreamworks)

Now that the editors at Spin are raving this almost seems like a moot point, but I'll be damned if Elliott didn't make the pop record of the year. The fact that it hasn't sold millions yet is the proof.

Eric Action

1. Birth of Lukas Anderson

2. The Donna's American Teenage Rock and Roll Machine LP (Lookout)

3. Teenage Shutdown LPs Vol. 1-5 (Cryp Records)

4. Thundercrack *Own Shit Home* CD

5. Nuggets 4xCD Box set (Rhino)
these singles were mostly indie at the time

Kim Bae

Top five LPs • EPs • reissues/old stuff rereleased • [11] live bands of 1998 (well, since last year's top five list was compiled)

1. Charles Bronson *Youth Attack!*

*(Lengua Armada) • Italia La Punk comp. (Agipunk/Alarma) • Los Crudos *Los Primeros Gritos* (Lengua Armada) • DDI & Seein' Red*

2. Youth Against *La Revolución de los de Abajo* (Alarma) • Abuso Sonoro *Já Basta!* (Bombers) • Pink Flamingos *Crippled Silence* (Thought Crime) • Amor Protesta y Odio & *Grievance*

3. Y Ali Bombaye (Thought Crime) • E150/Unabombers

(Don't Belong) • Systematic Death For the Punks and the Thrashers (JPC) • Oi Polloi & Fun People

4. Crepa/Corrosione (Agipunk/Alarma) • *Code 13 A Part of America Died Today* (Havoc) •

Pink Turds in Space/Sedition (Flat Earth) • His Hero is Gone & Los Crudos

5. MK Ultra/Seein' Red (Coalition) • *Slain/State of Filth* (Enslaved) • *Massacre 68* (Sin Fronteras) • *Disturbio Menor, Ebola, & Stalker*

Darren Cahr

1. *Infinite Jest* David Foster Wallace

Simply the best book I've read in ages, explains why we're addicted to everything from "entertainment" to drugs. The footnotes are a hoot.

2. *The Starr Report* The Office of the Independent Council

Pretty much the best evidence I've seen that government—how shall I say it?—sucks.

3. *Plastilina Mosh*

Yeah, they're on a major label (albeit a Mexican major label) but they crack me up. Anyone who can sound that screwy in a language I can only understand half the time and still keep me that interested wins big points, baby.

4. *Shellac Terraform*

Jagged, noisy and cool. Steve Albini does it again, as usual.

5. *The Last Gastr del Sol* album

It's great and makes me sad that they're gone.

For our first issue of the new year, we always ask our trusty staff to compile the best five things—records, zines, events, ideas, whatever—they came across during the past year. This is the result of that request.

the best of



Bob Conrad

1. Zoinks! European tour.
2. Snuff Tweet Tweet My Lovely CD and live shows.
3. Low CDs
4. Archers of Loaf White Trash Heroes CD
5. *Genetic Disorder, Dishwasher, The Probe, Cometbus, Punk Planet & Tail Spins* zines.

Brian Czarnik

1. Hagfish s/t
2. Apocalypse Hoboken House of the Rising Son of a Bitch
3. NoFx So Long and Thanks for All the Shoes
4. Connie Dungs Driving on Neptune
5. Gaza Strippers Transitor 7"

Marie Davenport

1. v/a *Weird, Waxed, and Wired* LP (Radio Blast)
2. v/a *World Full of Friends* LP (Repent)
3. Rondelles CD (Smells Like Records)
4. !!! 7" (hopscotch)
5. Gang Of Four x2CD re-release (Rhino)

Greg Gartland

In no particular order, and all falling behind the Yankees world series win, here is my top five:

1. Nashville Pussy *Let Them Eat Pussy* LP
Can't go wrong with the pedigree: ex-9 lb. Hammer. Plus one of them eats fire. And they rock.
2. Problematics *The Kids All Suck* LP (Rip Off)
Good, in spite of being almost all previously released.
3. Chinese Millionaires LP (Rip Off)
Good band.
4. Roswell Project *Bacteria Sour file version 7"*
Pushead is a lunatic. This wins for packaging alone. Acetate cover+poster+carbon sheet with band members typed on+color vinyl+vellum sheets with other info+manilla card that looks like a file+a FUCKING five-and-a-quarter-inch FLOPPY DISK, FOIL STAMPED???? That man should be institutionalized.

5. Mud City Manglers

They couldn't make it on just one seven-inch, but the strength of both puts them over the top. Rock and roll bro.

Jane Hex

1. Elliott Smith *XO*
2. Modest Mouse *The Lonesome Crowded West*
3. Jets to Brazil *Orange Rhyming Dictionary*
4. Pavement *Brighten the Corners*
5. 764-HERO *Get Here And Stay*

Josh Hooten

1. Running the Chicago Half Marathon
2. Kim Saigh tattoos
3. Sammy Sosa/Mark McGwire home run race
4. *You Can't Be Neutral on a Moving Train: A Personal History of Our Times* Howard Zinn
5. My brother becoming a fireman
6. Los Crudos live at the Fireside Bowl 10/17/98. R.I.P.
7. My best friends exchanging vows.

Patti Kim

1. Getting a \$105 ticket for trickling through a red light on my bicycle.

Can you believe it?! The irony of the situation was that I was on my way to the Metro Reference Library to do a research project on young drivers in Canada. I was livid! Thankfully, my friend Joanne calmed me down with beer. Yay beer.

2. Falling from veganism head-long into a big bag of sour cream 'n' onion chips.

Fellow Tel Quel-er Lisa witnessed this pathetic crumbling of willpower and savoured every bit of it. Other friends of mine scoffed at my evil apple of choice. And y'know what? Them chippies were dang fine.

3. My band playing the More Than Music Fest as our fifth show ever.

What a bunch of loser assholes who were the 'stage crew' or whatthe-fuckever. And who was that creepy kid with the videocamera taping our set? Do we know you? Send us a copy! Too bad Crudos unloaded their T-shirts for sale as we started to play. Oh well.

4. The Secret Stars.

*How many hours have I spent listening to the sooper sappy sounds of Geoff and Jodi, holee crow. Seeing Jodi play at the Simple Machines farewell party was rad but I'm sure everyone would have loved to see Geoff there too. It would've made spending a whole evening lost in D.C. worth it all: Their latest CD, *Genealogies*, is movie-like. Thank you, 5:17, for foisting this band's music upon me so many moons ago. You've got pretty good taste for a boy with numbers for a name.*

5. And finally, what year would be complete without sex conversations in the park with your dearest friends over donuts and coffee.

So good. Almost as good as the bucket swings that I instantly fell in love with, and that's saying a lot.



Joel Schalit

In no particular order

1. The Evolution Control Committee Rocked By Rape 7"

(Eerie Materials)

A great reason for hope at the end of the alterna-decade, ECC's splice and dice routine of Dan Rather over a thunderous detournement of AC/DC's "Back In Black" makes this delightfully fucked-up political slab of wax the first authentic collage-punk anthem.

2. K Records, Vermiform & Vinyl Communications

Between the Classic Elements, Fruited Other Surfaces and Big City Orchestra compilations, these three labels have done more to renew indie rock's artistic mandate than any other in recent years.

3. The Murder City Devils, Live at Café Du Nord, SF Sept. '98

Can't say enough great things about this charming group of rocking NW misfits. When the drummer lit his cymbals on fire and the guitarist flashed a retarded sneer at the audience, I was in rock 'n' roll heaven.

4. Thee Goblins We Are Thee Goblins From Canada Mint/Narduwar split 12" w/The Evaporators

Narduwar the Human Serviette's interview with Iggy Pop is absolutely priceless, especially when he accuses Iggy of looking like Mark Arm of Mudhoney. "No I don't," laughs Iggy, "He might look a little like me!"

5. The Tight Brothers From Way Back When, live at Bottom of the Hill, February '98

There's nothing better than hearing MC5 style '70s metal played by a really inspired punk band. The results are unbelievable, particularly when vocalist Jared downs a huge jug of mid-priced Calistoga mineral water and screams "All right!" at the top of his lungs.

Dan Sinker

BEST REASON FOR LIVING IN 1998: The disruption of the CNN Town Meeting on Iraq February 18.

Who says people can't change history anymore? If it wasn't for a passionate band of troublemakers (including our own Jon Strange) making a dissenting voice FINALLY heard on (inter)national television, we probably would have bombed Iraq back to the stone age.

FIVE BEST RECORDS: Fugazi *End Hits* (Dischord) • Tortoise *TNT* (Thrill Jockey) • Cadallaca introducing... (K Records) • ICU *chotto matte a moment!* (K Records) • Pullman *Turnstyles & Junkpiles* (Thrill Jockey)

BEST BOOK: *Whiteout: The CIA, Drugs and the Press* by Alexander Cockburn and Jeffery St. Clair

One of my writing heroes Alexander Cockburn's book documenting the CIA's involvement in drug trafficking since the birth of the Agency. Once you finish this meticulously well-researched book, you'll be unable to look at the world the same way again.

BEST THING TO HAPPEN TO ME: Moving Punk Planet into an office

The future is now. I never would have imagined this would be possible. Proof that perseverance and an unbelievable amount of hard work really can pay off sometimes. Plus, I got my apartment back.

FIVE BEST MOVIES: *Out of Sight* • *The Big One* • *Twentyfourseven* • *The Spanish Prisoner* • *Relax, it's Just Sex*

Jon Strange

1. The Town Hall Meeting in Columbus

More than anything else this year, the protest showed me what incredible impact a small group of people can have on the world. As we let the Clinton Administration stooges know what we thought of their war, I kept thinking to myself, "They'll never let us keep this up. Any minute now, they'll arrest us all and drag us out of here..." Incredibly, we got away with it—while it was broadcast live around the world. Credit due to all the Columbus activists who made it happen, to CNN for handing us the audience, and to the people in Minneapolis who showed us how to do it even better the very next day.

2. Watching 400 punks at the Columbus Gay Pride March

On the last day of the More Than Music Fest, all wearing "Queer Is Not A Commodity" T-shirts in protest of Coors' sponsorship of the parade. I've never seen anything quite like it from the punk scene, and I'm sure the yuppie elements of the Columbus gay community didn't know what to make of it either.

3. A bootlegged collection of 22 stories by J.D. Salinger

None of these stories have been available for years. Throughout this book, Salinger's characters share his trademark melancholy optimism that's strangely comforting. Thanks go out to whoever brought these stories back from the dead.

4. Melt Banana live in Cleveland.

Absolutely mind-warping.

5. The Mountain Goats live in Chicago in December of '97.

Though technically not last year, this show is one of my most memorable of the past several years. I couldn't stop smiling through the entire set.

Chris Ziegler

1. Malignus Youth, *Missa Brevis/Ephemeral* CD (Youth Ink Records, POB 65802, Tucson, AZ 85728-5802)

A genuinely inspiring, intricately arranged punk rock Latin Mass—in Latin, of course—complete with multi-part choir boy harmonies, plus outtakes from this almost criminally obscure but nonetheless absolutely unique Arizona band.

2. C.R.A.S.—Croquet Revival and Appreciation Society

Making America's most misunderstood lawn sport a threat again by taking the thinking man's golf to the streets.

3. Weird Lovemakers/ U.S. Impossibles split 7" (No Theme Records, 2509 N. Campbell Ave. #75 Tucson, AZ 85719)

Noisy, trashy, and catchy screech-along punk appropriately recorded in four track mono that sounds better and better when played louder and louder.

4. Pour Some Sugar On Me zine #11 (Erin Q. 3 Orchard Drive, Yorktown Heights, NY 10598)

So vitriolic it'll melt your fingerprints off and so expertly written you'll be ashamed you ever presumed to make a zine of your own. It gets no better than this—trade Cheez-It Party Mix for a copy.

5. Discount (live)

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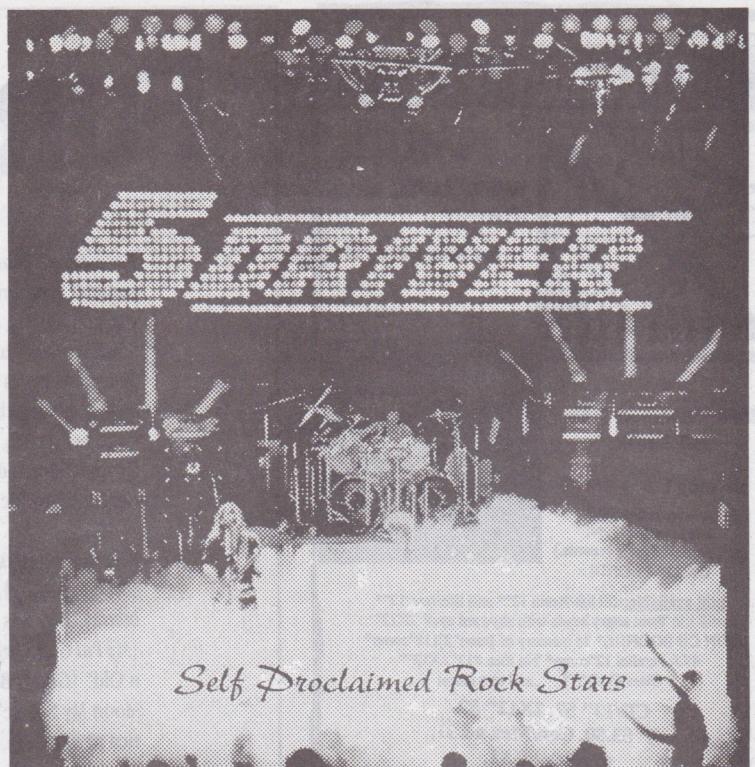
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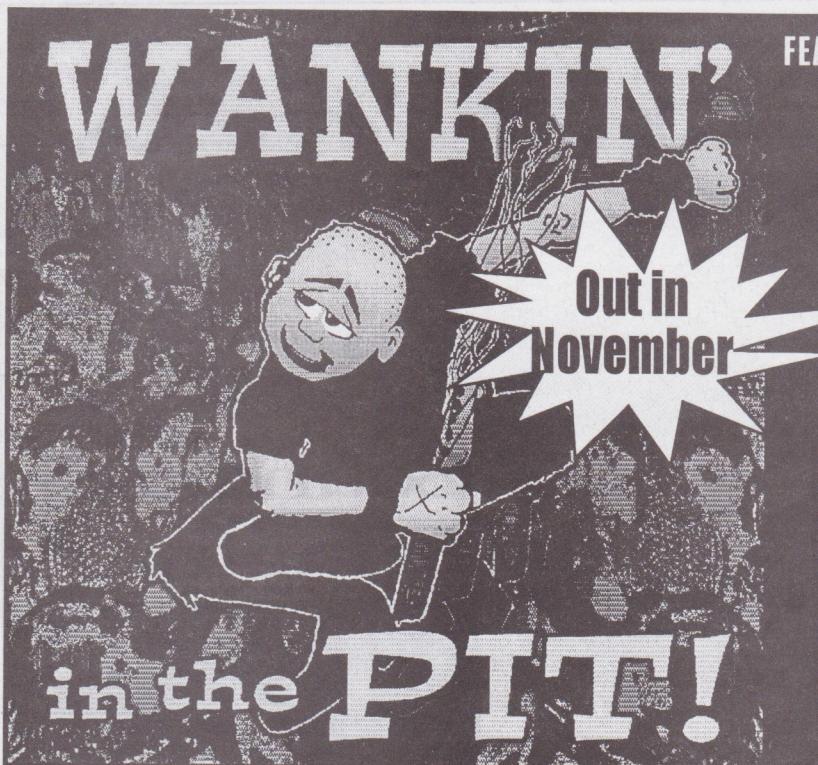
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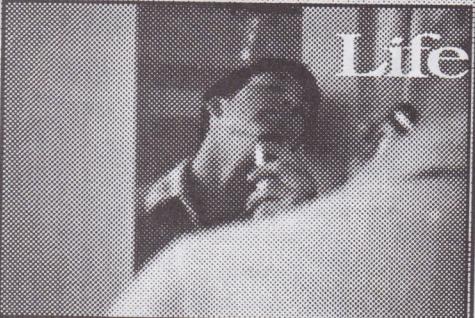
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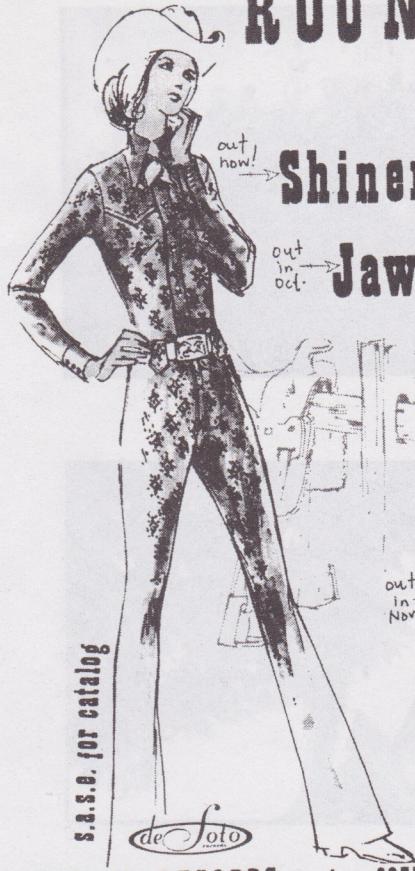
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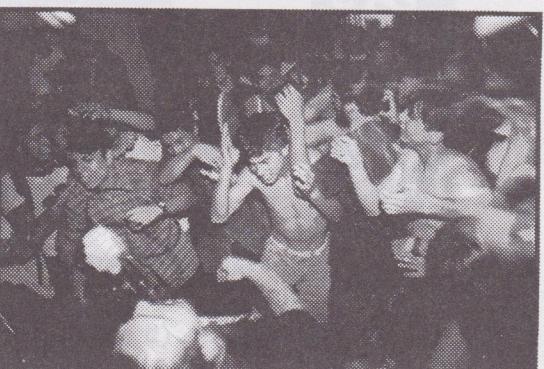
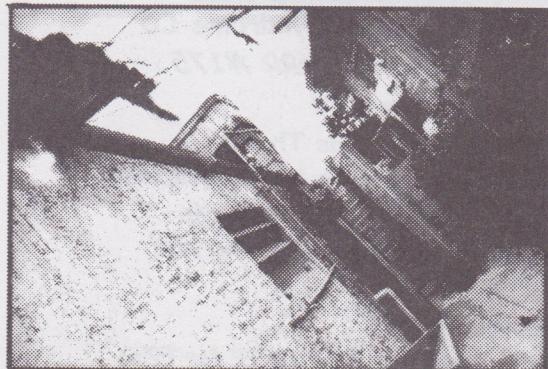
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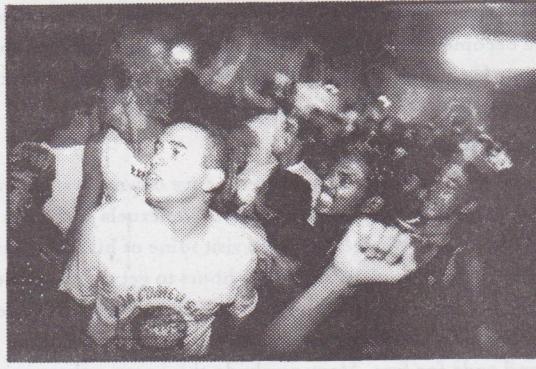
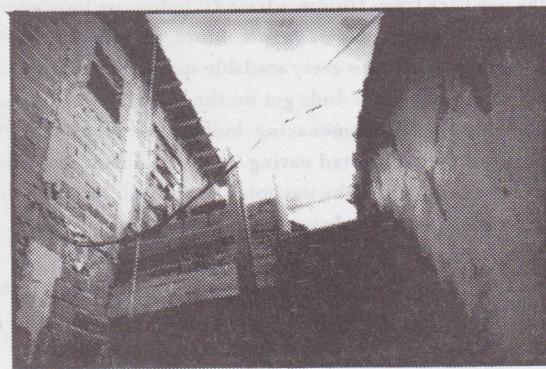
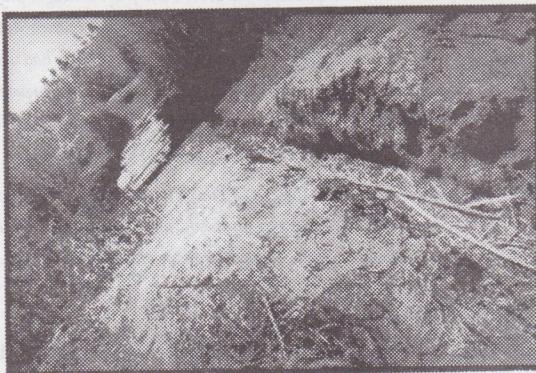
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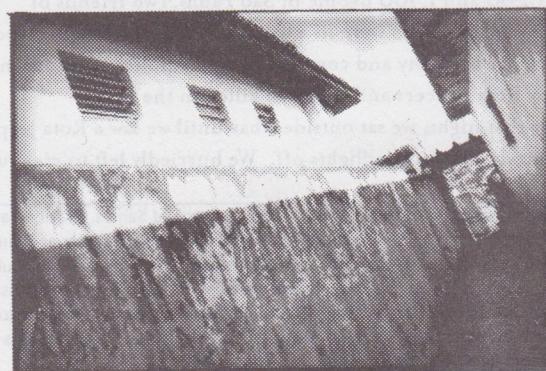
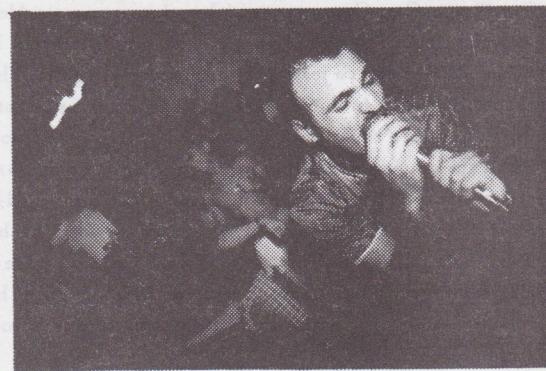
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LOS CRUDOS

in South America: a diary



When Los Crudos, the seminal Latino hardcore band from Chicago, played their final shows the weekend of October 17th, 1998, one of their stated reasons for ending their seven-year career was simply that they had achieved more than they had ever could have imagined. One of their most impressive achievements was their late 1997 tour of South America—a tour put together completely DIY by the band themselves with help from a legion of penpals and friends on the continent.

This is a diary of that tour, as seen through the eyes of Punk Planet columnist Kim Bae, who served as roadie and merchandise salesperson for the duration of the tour. While this is her story, it serves also as a testament to the lasting power of Crudos (1991-1998).

14 Dec • São Paulo, Brazil

I can't believe it. We're in São Paulo. Something like 22 million people live here! Alex from Rot, Angelo from Abuso Sonoro, and Josimas from too many bands to list picked us up from the airport. On the way to Josimas' house, Alex and I had a really good talk comparing social situations in the US and Brazil. He told me that if certain people become recognized by the police as troublemakers, they'll just kill them. He also told me about a recent riot during a police strike, when officers were shooting at each other. Ha!

15 Dec • São Paulo, Brazil

I woke up to the sound of Dumpster's voice downstairs. He was a friend of ours from the US who had flown to Venezuela and *hitch-hiked* all the way here. We decided to go visit some of his friends in northern São Paulo. It took us about two hours to get there. In the middle of the buses are turnstiles and a conductor who takes money. We told him we didn't have any money so we went underneath the turnstiles and rode for free. Many punks do this because the minimum wage is about \$120 a month. Me, Dumpy, Ebro [Crudos drummer], and Dumpy's friend Romulo went to Romulo's place—one of two houses referred to as Casa Comuna—to pick up his roommate Alex.

We had walked about two blocks when I heard tires screech. I turned around. All I saw was a jeep, gray uniforms, and guns. The police were shouting at us in Portuguese, waving their weapons at us—their machine guns were cocked. We all raised our arms. The police asked if we had any drugs, searched us, and spat hostile questions at us, such as what the fuck Ebro's ear plugs were for. Dumpy tried to show them his passport, but he was told to shut up and keep his hands above his head. The police finally listened when he told them we were from the US. They ignored the three of us from then on. After hassling Romulo and Alex for a few more minutes they barked, "Move it!" and we happily obliged.

It turns out that they were *Rota*, or "Repression Police." Depending on whom you talk to, last year alone they killed somewhere between 1,200 and 1,700 people in São Paulo. Two friends of Romulo and Alex's, who were in a band called Bosta Rala that spoke out against the brutality and corruption of the police, were taken out of a bar by *Rota* officers and shot and killed in the street.

Later that night, we sat outside a bar until we saw a *Rota* jeep drive by slowly with its headlights off. We hurriedly left to meet up

photos opposite pages (left to right, top to bottom): beach at Santos, Brazil; anarchist gathering, Uruguay; Los Crudos at Haedo, Argentina; bridge to the shitter at anarchist gathering, Uruguay; capoeira "dancing" at Guarulhos, São Paulo, Brazil; São Paulo, Brazil; Casa Comuna São Paulo, Brazil; crowd watching Los Crudos at Guarulhos; Buenos Aires, Argentina; stage dive king, Rosario, Argentina; Los Crudos in Santos, Brazil; São Paulo, Brazil; Los Crudos in Santiago, Chile; Los Crudos at Mogi, Das Cruzes, Brazil; Casa Comuna, São Paulo, Brazil all photos by Kim Bae

with Martin, Jose, and Juan [the other three members of Los Crudos] at the other Casa Comuna where there was a party in full swing. Everybody there came up to Ebro and I to introduce themselves, offer us a beer or cigarette, and attempt some conversation. Whenever someone else walked in, they'd do the same. I couldn't believe it! Imagine that happening in the US, or even in Europe. Some people even tried to speak a few words of Spanish or English with me. That would definitely not happen in America. Here, no matter where we went or how poor our hosts were, people were constantly offering us food, drinks or cigarettes.

Right before we went to sleep, Alex and Masseo gave us a demonstration of *capoeira*, a traditional dance of Angolan slaves who came up with this form of martial arts hidden in dance so they could practice it without the slavemasters knowing.

16 Dec • São Paulo, Brazil

On the way back from Dumpy's friends' house, we took a bus into an area called Santo Amaro. People, buses, merchandise booths and shops were squeezed into every available space. About an hour after we boarded, some crazy dude got on the bus with a plastic bag. He immediately pulled out a menacing-looking metal container with faded red paint on it and started waving it in an old man's face. He grabbed it and motioned like he was going to throw it out the window. They started arguing, everybody was staring really nervously at the guy, and the old man got off after a minute or two. The crazy guy turned to other passengers cracking jokes and started hassling Dumpy who immediately told us to get off the bus. Afterwards, Dumpy told us that the guy had some sort of flammable material in the container. Apparently he was asking everyone for a match, saying he was going to light a cigarette and then blow the bus up.

18 Dec • Santos, Brazil

The venue in Santos was right next to the beach, so Martin and I got some fruit and walked down to the waterfront to relax a bit. Later on I went to a bar around the corner with Juan, Josimas, and some other guy. Josimas and I started talking about the working conditions in Brazilian orange orchards. Kids between the ages of seven and 17 work all day picking oranges for a dollar or a plate of food a day. Their fingers wear away as a result of the acid from the oranges. They are sprayed up to five times per day by pesticides and many die within a few years of working. Makes McDonalds sound like a day at the beach, eh?

19 Dec • Santos and Mogi Das Cruzes, Brazil

We woke up early enough to go to the beach before we had to leave. It was pretty fun until I discovered that some yellow stuff on the surface of the water that I thought was algae was actually bubbles.

Around four, we caught our bus to Mogi. A few minutes after we got on, this woman came up to me screaming and yelling about how I was in her seat. The bus company had wisely overbooked the trip. Elaine argued with her for a long time, but I just stood in the aisle for the next four hours. Yippee.

A couple pop-punk bands played tonight. Once again, it was unbelievably easy to meet people. Unfortunately, I kept getting cornered by this creepy guy fucked up on cocaine who spoke fluent English. Funny how the only person I didn't want to talk to in the entire place was the one person that spoke English! I managed to escape him right before Crudos came on, at around 3 am. After they

finished, this guy Tatú got on the mic and made some sort of speech. I didn't understand a thing. People cheered.

Me, Juan and Jose went to Tatú, Marciano and Fumasa's apartment. Seven people lived inside their tiny two-bedroom apartment! Tatú and I stayed up until 9:30 in the morning talking—no mean feat for two people speaking in Spanish whose native languages are Portuguese and English.

20 Dec • Guarulhos, São Paulo, Brazil

Around seven pm we left to go to the show in Guarulhos. In front of the train station, Marciano left for a second. He came back with train tickets even though he had no money—I didn't ask any questions. There were all these vendors trying to sell beer and candy. One of them set his cooler down in front of us and addressed all the passengers in a loud, drunken bellow, gesturing toward Juan. "Here, ladies and gentlemen, is a famous artist who has come all the way from Mexico to show his artwork. He has come disguised like this (jabbing at his spiky hair) so no one will recognize him!" He went on and on like this until a train employee spotted him whereupon he snatched up his cooler and took off like a whirlwind, leaving us laughing hysterically.

At the show, Execradores, one of Josimas' bands, played first. It seemed like everybody knew all the words to their songs. They were excellent. The next band, Amor Protesta Y Odio (who Josimas also played with) seemed to have everybody from Casa Comuna in it. They blew me away.

After their set, a "game" or "dance" of *capoeira* began and lasted for about an hour. They had a drum and an instrument that resembled a large hunting bow and everyone was clapping and chanting along rhythmically. One duo at a time went. It was really moving and beautiful to see such a graceful display of culture at a punk show. Everyone was participating in an indigenous form of resistance, showing a depth of understanding of culture and history that just does not exist in the US. At the very end, the tempo and fervor built up to a frenzied pace. The dancing became more aggressive and rapid. I was in awe at the sight of everyone participating.

Los Crudos played last and were truly amazing. While Martin recited the poem at the beginning of their first 7", people were shouting out encouragement and whooping. About halfway through their set, I decided I'd taken enough photos and jumped into the crowd. Everyone was dancing, slamming, stage diving and having a great time. This was the first moment in months that I'd been able to see them without either taking photos or selling their merchandise. They didn't finish until five in the morning.

21 Dec • Pinheiros, São Paulo, Brazil

I woke up around two. Everyone was still up talking and eating. When it was about time to leave, Tatú told me he wasn't going to the show. We exchanged addresses. He told me to give hugs and kisses to everyone in Los Crudos. We stood there for a few awkward seconds. Then I abruptly turned and moved toward the door. It seemed like he was following behind me, so I walked outside. Fuck, I felt so nervous. Should I give him a hug and kiss goodbye too? That was the custom here but I still wasn't really used to it yet. Could I really just casually kiss someone I was genuinely attracted to? I turned around on the

sidewalk and saw him standing in the doorway. Everyone else was already halfway up the street, so I lamely waved and said, "Ciao." He returned the gesture. I berated myself for being so rude and fucking stupid. Ten months later I still think about this—and him.

We waited for at least an hour for the bus. I hoped to myself that we wouldn't have to walk far to the gig because I felt like shit. I'd only eaten one meal and slept for about eight hours in two full days. Romulo also complained that his skin felt cold and he wasn't feeling all that great himself.

Once we got off the bus, we crossed the busy six lane street through this weird median with a chain across it. A couple of us were little ahead walking up an intersecting street. Romulo called to us to not go up that way. We had just started to head back when I heard this roar that resembled the cheer of fans at a basketball game. I turned around and saw this huge mob of young guys spilling out into the street. I only had enough time to wonder what the fuck was going on before Romulo grabbed my hand and whirled me around to face him. "Carcas" he screamed at me—Fascists!

I tried to run as fast as I could, but I was bogged down by all my bags. We ran about two blocks and dashed out across the street and to the median—it was a miracle we didn't get hit by a car. As we were running down the median, I saw everyone else up ahead. I turned around briefly and saw one guy right behind me. I thought, "He's not going to do anything to me," right before I felt his foot kick me in the back. In the split second before I hit the ground, the thought that I was going to

We had walked about two blocks when I heard tires screech. I turned around. All I saw was a jeep, gray uniforms, and guns. ... It turns out that they were *Rota*, or "Repression Police." Depending on whom you talk to, last year alone they killed somewhere between 1,200 and 1,700 people in São Paulo. Two friends of Romulo and Alex's, who were in a band called *Bosta Rala* that spoke out against the brutality and corruption of the police, were taken out of a bar by *Rota* officers and shot and killed in the street.

get hit by a car. Amazingly, it didn't happen. The rest of the crowd swarmed around me and began full-on kicking the shit out of me and yelling shit in Portuguese that I couldn't understand. I just kept repeating, "Não falo português!" and covered my head with my arms.

Out of nowhere, Romulo scooped me up with one arm and grabbed onto the windowsill of a passing car with the other. I was dragging on the street, trying desperately to hang on to Romulo but the car was going pretty fast and I eventually lost my grip and scraped to a stop on the street. I got up and ran to the car which had stopped. Romulo was pleading with the people to let us in but they just spat "Não!" and rolled up the windows. In the meantime, the crowd of around 40 or 50 caught up to us again. Someone kicked me to the ground and they resumed beating the crap out of us. I could feel the contact of the kicks and punches on my body, but it didn't really hurt. I saw them pummeling Romulo though and I just wanted to cry because he looked so helpless. I eventually resigned myself to the idea that we were going to die. After maybe 10 or 15 minutes, everybody suddenly left.

Romulo and I stood in the median for a while holding each other. We hobbled with our arms around each other down the street

because one of his knees and his back were fucked up. A few blocks later, we met up with everybody else. They were all charged and frustrated, banging around various makeshift weapons they'd picked up.

I had noticed before that a good majority of the punks here wore political T-shirts. At first I didn't think much of it but after the encounter with the *carecas*, I realized the significance ran much deeper than it seemed. Here people get totally fucked with by the police, get the shit kicked out of them and even killed for just looking punk and being outspoken. The sociopolitical messages of the bands struck me with a new meaning tonight.

24 Dec • Buenos Aires, Argentina

We arrived at 8:30 in the morning and went to the singer of Fun People, Nekro's, apartment. He showed us all the flyers for the shows and the tape compilation of all of Crudos' stuff that his label, Las Feos Discos had made for the tour. Then we went to Chule, Fun People bassist's house and had a huge meal cooked up by his mom.

When we walked around Buenos Aires, I kept getting hit on. What the hell? I had a shaved head, I smelled like shit, my clothes were all ratty and torn up—this is attractive to normal men?

Around six in the morning, I was still asleep in the loft when Gato slammed on the brakes right before we hit a speed bump. I woke up when we hit the bump and felt the entire loft collapse. I plummeted downward. When the van came to a stop I looked around blindly (I didn't have my contacts in) and blurted out in English, "Is everyone OK?" I repeated myself in Spanish. No one answered and I started getting scared.

25 Dec • Buenos Aires, Argentina

Today was Juan's birthday. He hit the quarter century mark. We took a train to Lucas' house. His mom cooked us up a huge meal of pizza and fainá (a cornmeal-based, disc shaped type of bread). She made an entire pizza without cheese for me and when I finished, offered me another one. I was stuffed!

Lucas screened some Crudos stickers and I saw the huge piles of Crudos T-shirts they'd made. I can't believe they did so much work for the tour: 200 tapes, 200 T-shirts, and god knows how many stickers.

After dinner we went to a crappy rock show and then to this fancy dance club where they had scantily clad women dancing on a stage. I ended up talking a lot to this guy Gustavo for quite a bit. I was asking him a lot of questions about the Argentinean dirty war. After a pretty intense discussion he laughed and said, "But I prefer the sincerity of being a drunk to the reality of life."

27 Dec • Buenos Aires, Argentina

The show tonight was in the basketball court of a health club. The She-Devils were first. While they were playing, men kept jumping on stage and grabbing Patricia's ass. One guy even ran up to her and kissed her while she was singing!

By the time Crudos went on, the place was totally packed. There were 2000 people there. I was videotaping most of the set—it took over a minute and a half to pan the whole crowd!

Fun People were last. Some idiot in the crowd kept heckling Nekro, who jumped off the stage a few times to punch him. That

really surprised me! Nekro is such an easy-going, gentle guy. The crowd ended up kicking the kid out. Martin went on stage and sang an *Ataque Frontal* cover with them.

Mauro, one of the promoters for the show in Uruguay, ran up to me and told me Jose had broken his nose. He'd fallen off the stage during Fun People's set and landed on his face. Marisa and Juan had rushed him to the hospital.

When we got back to Chule's, me, Martin, Emiliano [Fun People's roadie], and Carolina [Em's girlfriend] went out to this amazing pizza place right around the corner. Emiliano told us his father had been executed by the military. Carolina's aunt was "disappeared" and the government kept sending her family Christmas cards for two years afterwards to torture them. The government kept telling them to send money for her aunt's return, which they complied with. After two years, they finally found out that her aunt had been murdered within the first six months of her disappearance. I felt sick with sadness and anger. We found out that Chule's family had fled Argentina because of the war, his family to Brazil and father to Spain. It seems that everyone we know here had somehow been affected by the war.

28 Dec • La Plata, Argentina

At one point during tonight's show, Martin started talking about the repression and political strife that occurred in Uruguay and connected it to the situation in Argentina. He asked if people were going to allow the recent past to just be buried (we all had noticed that nobody seemed to want to talk about these things and preferred to shop and party).

"No," they replied.

"En voz más alta, ¿van a olvidarse del pasado?"

This time everybody shouted, "No!" That moved me a lot. Thirty fucking thousand people murdered or disappeared—it would be a crime to forget about all those people.

04 Jan • Santiago, Chile

I woke up sweating in the van's loft, sandwiched between Nekro and Lucas whose feet were in my face. I vaguely recalled that at one point in the night there were five of us crammed up there on two tiny mattresses. The scenery near the Chile-Argentina border was breathtaking. Snow-capped mountains, rocky crags, mountainsides dotted with trees.

Once we crossed the border, I was told the rest of the way to Santiago was downhill. The route on the mountain was insane—the road wound in 180 degree turns where we couldn't drive any faster than about 10 mph. A sign announced 33 of those monster curves, we didn't have a functioning second gear, the clutch was going out, and Jose said he thought he could smell the brakes burning. Whee!

Around nine, we finally pulled into Santiago but we couldn't find the club. We came across two kids that told us that the show was supposed to have started at five and that since we didn't show up, the promoters canceled it. Over a thousand people had showed up! Man, we were going to be fucked. No show means no money and we'd just spent a whole lot of it on food for 11 people, gas, van maintenance, and ungodly road tolls (around US \$7-10 each). When we heard the news we all exploded with tension and jumped on top of each other, wrestling around to let off steam.

05 Jan • Santiago, Chile

Some people had thrown together a last-minute show because the originally planned gig in Valparaiso tonight was also canceled. It was at a fairly small space with about 200 people jammed inside—all there by word-of-mouth that spread in five hours time. Joao's band Redención 9-11 played fast and heavy, screaming hardcore. Fun People wanted Los Crudos to play last but they said, "Are you fucking crazy? Everybody's here to see you!" This was one of the best shows of the tour: cozy, everyone singing along to every song and going nuts without hurting each other.

06 Jan • Santiago, Chile

The show tonight was at the same discotheque that the gig on Sunday was supposed to be at. They were going to let in the 500 people that had paid that day and maybe some more. They ended up letting in about 850 or so. Disturbio Menor was first. They only played a 10 minute instrumental set because their singer had just left the band. They were great though and everybody was totally into them.

During Los Crudos' set, one idiot yelled out, "Yankees go home!" Martin quickly pointed out that the dude was wearing a T-shirt of an American band and shut him up.

I had to sit behind the merchandise counter during Fun People's set where I couldn't see anything which kind of sucked. This was our last show with them. I would have loved to have been able to watch them but the sound was so good that it was cool to be able to just listen without being distracted. During one of my favorite songs, "Annabelle," the echo of the entire crowd singing along was like nothing I'd ever heard. I started feeling a bit sad.

07 Jan • Santiago, Chile

Before we left, we called the border patrol. They told us the border was going to close at 6 pm. What the fuck, an international borders closing? There was no way we could make it on time, so we just went out to eat. On the way to the restaurant, Nekro disappeared. He emerged about 10 minutes later with a present for Dumpy: a little stuffed animal of Oscar the Grouch.

08 Jan • On the Road

I woke up as we were pulling into this stunning scenic area called Puente de Inca. There was a bridge over a river that looked like it was carved out of the land. It was set in a valley between two rows of brilliant mountains that ranged from lush and green to rough, craggy rock formations. All the way up from the river the land was covered with plant life of hundreds of different varieties, dozens of tiny streams of water, and a beautiful church perched up on a hill. I've never seen anything so incredible in my life.

09 Jan • On the Road & Las Piedras, Uruguay

Around six in the morning, I was still asleep in the loft when Gato slammed on the brakes right before we hit a speed bump. I woke up when we hit the bump and felt the entire loft collapse. I plummeted downward. When the van came to a stop I looked around blindly (I didn't have my contacts in) and blurted out in English, "Is everyone OK?" I repeated myself in Spanish. No one answered and I started getting scared. Then I saw Martin get out and start helping people up.

When I got off the mattress I looked under the boards and saw Juan on his back in this weird contorted position looking wide-eyed. As we climbed out of the van we made sure no one was hurt. Then we started laughing hysterically. Wait, where was Chule? Martin looked inside the van and there he was, lying underneath the collapsed loft where I'd last seen him, tightly wrapped in a blanket. He was just beginning to wake up. We laughed even more hysterically at the sight of him blinking his eyes sleepily. Without moving at all, he just glanced around the chaos of the van and closed his eyes again.

We finally got to Buenos Aires, where after some food and good-byes we boarded a boat for Montevideo. Surprisingly, we had no problems at the border. Mauro picked us up and after dropping our stuff off at his house, we went directly to the show. The first band, Malas Influencias, woke me up and they were worth it—really good melodic hardcore. They had this kind of fresh energy that I haven't seen in along time. Toward the end of their set, Martin said he was going to lie down. He came back a few seconds later and said, "Some guy just pissed on me!" He happened to be unlucky enough to be walking by some drunken guy just as he whipped out his dick and started pissing everywhere. "It got on my shoes!" I tried not to laugh.

Pirexia, Mauro's band, were next. They played raw punk hardcore with a similar kind of energy as Malas Influencias. I was starting to dig this show with tons of friendly people and good new bands. Little did I know...

Crudos were last and as usual, the crowd got kind of rowdy. It became evident after a short while that a particular group of people were really fucking wasted and being way more obnoxious than necessary. One guy kept throwing himself on stage, practically knocking Juan and Jose over. Another one kept getting into verbal fights with people. While Martin talked in between songs, they kept yelling stupid shit like, "More beer!" Someone threw and shattered a bottle against the wall. I could tell Martin was getting really angry. Fifteen minutes into the set he slammed the set list notebook shut. He said that it was sad that those kids thought that was what punk was about. The morons he was talking about cheered, obviously completely missing the point.

I woke up as we were pulling into this stunning scenic area called Puente de Inca. There was a bridge over a river that looked like it was carved out of the land. It was set in a valley between two rows of brilliant mountains that ranged from lush and green to rough, craggy rock formations. All the way up from the river the land was covered with plant life of hundreds of different varieties, dozens of tiny streams of water, and a beautiful church perched up on a hill. I've never seen anything so incredible in my life.

During the last few songs I saw a couple kids that were genuinely really into the show and paying attention to what Martin said—I felt sorry for them. Predictably, the idiots tried to get Crudos to play longer when they finished, but Martin just said no and walked off the stage. I felt so bad for him. The show he was looking forward to the most—so close to where he was born—ended up being the worst one of the whole tour.

10 Jan • Montevideo, Uruguay

Martin and I went to his aunt's house so he could drop off his bags. His cousin drove us to the airport to buy plane tickets to São

Paulo because all the buses were sold out for the next three weeks. I took the bus back to Mauro's in Las Piedras by myself which wasn't so bad. Mauro's mom kept offering me food and she even put a mattress out so I could take a nap. I finally took a shower and sat around and watched TV because I had absolutely no energy until Jose and Mauro got back. Juan had left to go to a protest at the Mexican consulate regarding the recent massacre in Chiapas.

12 Jan • Montevideo, Uruguay

I went into town and walked around trying to see the sights. Afraid I'd get lost, I stayed on the same four main streets and tried to navigate in between them. I came across a little artisan market that sold handmade jewelry, candleholders and such for unbelievably cheap prices. I bought some late Christmas presents for people, spending a shamefully small amount of money on these beautiful things.

About an hour after I had gotten on the bus, I panicked and thought I'd missed the stop in Las Piedras. I jumped off at the next stop and got some bread. There was a major bus depot nearby so I walked over and asked people how far Las Piedras was. Every single person pointed in the direction the bus I was on was going and said it was about 20 minutes away. I got on the next one and paid another 12 pesos (about US\$1.20). I don't know how people can afford the buses here!

Mauro's mom had made me some pizza and we started talking about the artisan stuff I'd bought. Soon enough, her husband joined in. They brought me virtually every decoration in the house, and talked about their personal history with each piece. I felt bad about eating their food and using up their electricity. I felt even worse when Mauro's dad said that the next time I was in Uruguay, the place would look a lot nicer for me. Mauro came home while we were talking. We stayed up for a while making plans for the next day. I tried to go to bed early but my mind was racing. I didn't fall asleep until around one or so.

13 Jan • Anarchist Gathering, Somewhere in Uruguay

Mauro's friend Gerardo and I left for the gathering around 11. It took three buses and two and a half hours but we made it. Right away I saw Romulo and sat next to him. I had brought two huge loaves of bread to eat and passed them around—they were devoured within minutes. There went my food for the day!

I asked Romulo if he'd seen my friend Sheri who was supposed to have gone to Brazil since I'd left. He said no. This woman turned to me and asked if I was looking for a Sheri that she knew from Minneapolis. I said no. We had a short conversation in Spanish. I found out later that her name was Sin and she was also from the US. I guess I'm the only gringo here who doesn't speak fluent Spanish.

A little while later, Dumpy came up and we walked around for a little bit visiting the other groups of people. He told me the food situation was really bad. When Martin had stopped by the day before, he'd donated \$100 to go toward food but nobody had bought anything besides bread. Dumpy had gone out and bought tons of eggplant and potatoes with his own money, but it was just sitting on a table, untouched except by a swarm of flies hovering above it. One of the organizers had the money Martin had donated, but was being really stingy with it. It was a little strange that all these people were sitting in these groups, starving but unwilling to do anything about it. We hung around for about a half an hour at which time this girl gave some other people money to buy oats. Oats? And bread? What were

these people thinking!

I saw a bunch of other people I'd met on the tour and said hi to them, not wanting to interrupt the discussions. When I walked up to a group that Tatú was talking in, I caught his eye and waved. He interrupted himself and came up to give me a big hug and kiss while everyone in the group watched, waiting for him to resume his dialogue.

"When did you get here? How are you? When are you leaving?" He asked.

I said Friday. He gave me another hug and turned back to the group. Boy was I looking forward to spending the next couple of days with him.

Dumpy and I went off to the side and talked about getting some food. Tatú walked up and we all went to a nearby orchard to buy some peaches. We got 14 kilos with our own money—just about enough for one peach for everyone at the gathering. We took turns carrying the bag back to the gathering and ate a few peaches to lighten the load.

As soon as we got back and set the peaches down on the ground, people fucking raided the bag like ravenous hyenas. Some were grabbing three or four at once, shoving them into their mouths with both fists. I looked on in disgust. I was annoyed that we had bought fruit for everybody and now probably a third or more wouldn't get any at all.

I met a guy named John who was from the US but studying abroad in Buenos Aires. He also seemed a bit wary of the state of the gathering. I talked to him until I saw Patricia show up with Mauro. I helped them set up the tent and then we joined a group of people nearby that were discussing something heatedly. After a while, I caught on that they were talking about the food situation. Some people wanted to go get some beer and wine but other people were arguing that money should go for food instead of alcohol. Others argued back that it shouldn't be a problem if they used their own money. Still others countered that even if they spent their own money, it would mean that much less that they would be able to contribute toward food for everyone.

Dumpy was getting irritated. "What, are they going to bring up smoking cigarettes and pot now too?" He asked, sarcastically.

But waddaya know, they did. A few people wanted to impose rules on drinking, cigarettes, and pot. It was starting to get pretty ridiculous and, ahem, authoritarian sounding. A further argument against drinking was that this was a gathering for discussion and organization, not for having fun and partying. People dwelled on this for quite a while before it developed from "Maybe the people who want to just have fun shouldn't be here" to "only people who are serious activists should be here" to "let's read the list of everyone invited and anyone not on the list has to leave." I couldn't believe this shit. One woman that was apparently in favor of reading off the list pointed at Patricia and said, "Like her. I don't know you. I don't know what you do. How do I know you belong here?" Jesus Christ, were we all going to have to take some kind of credential exam? Yep.

They started with Patricia. They fired question after question at her. Eventually she got disgusted and went back to the tent. I left the circle to talk to her and when I came back they were somehow back on the "we shouldn't have fun" topic again, but luckily had stopped the inquisition. They must have spent a good two hours discussing that shit. Time that could have been much better spent cooking or discussing or otherwise being productive. It cracked me up that the very arguments for kicking people out and being straight for a couple days (i.e. produc-

tivity) were hindering the accomplishment of their own objectives.

I forgot the word for it, but Marx had a theory about the very existence of certain things being the cause for their own destruction (like capitalism). I thought a lot about that idea while the argument was raging. Nothing was resolved, but eventually the tension dissolved and everyone ended up just milling around and talking.

I was sharing a one-person tent with two incredibly generous people. During the middle of the night, a loud, gusty and ferocious winds started kicking up, and tore through the tent so savagely I thought we were going to be blown away. The safety pins holding the tent closed no longer seemed charming.

14 Jan • Anarchist Gathering, Uruguay

Dumpy, Sin and I went into town today to eat and run some errands. Juan took off to try to find his way back to São Paulo. Dumpy had been complaining about how bland the food was, so we bought some spices. We didn't get back to the gathering until around dinner time. When we started putting some curry and chili powder on the bland rice, a crowd gathered around us.

"What's that?" "What are you doing?" I guess people were unfamiliar with spices or something.

One of the discussion topics was violence at shows and how to combat it. I kept my thoughts to myself, as I recognized a guy speaking as one of the stupid shitheads that had ruined the Crudos show on Friday. I just couldn't take this gathering very seriously.

15 Jan • Anarchist Gathering, Uruguay

Almost everybody went out to the beach today but Tatú and I stayed behind and just talked all day long. I hadn't met anybody in a long time that I felt this way about and we couldn't even speak each other's languages. I'm almost glad I'm not staying any longer because I would probably never leave.

For dinner people made tortas fritas, which were basically pieces of fried dough. I waited in line for about an hour. One of the cooks asked who hadn't gotten any yet and I said I hadn't. He nodded to the woman that was doling out the tortas and said to give one to me next. When the next batch was ready, the crowd lunged forward and grabbed them all up. The woman insisted that I get a piece, so one guy tore his in half and gave me the smaller part. That was the only thing I got to eat all day. I was starting to look forward to leaving.

16 Jan • Anarchist Gathering & Montevideo, Uruguay

There were only two buses that went back to Montevideo, so I had to leave around three. When I got up to go, Romulo and Tatú came over for a big three-way hug. I think one of them was crying because I felt something wet on my neck. It was hard to leave them but I tore myself away and walked the half-mile to the bus stop.

Luckily my memory didn't fail me. I got back to Las Piedras with no problems. I picked up my stuff at Mauro's and called Martin at his uncle's house. "Where the hell have you been?" He asked. Oops. I didn't have access to a phone and couldn't call him all week. I took a bus to his uncle's house and we went to a grocery store to get stuff for dinner. I thought that was a bit strange since it was like 10 at night, but Martin's uncle assured me that they always ate dinner that late.

When we got back to his house, I went into the bathroom and looked in a mirror for the first time in weeks. I looked like total hell: I'd been out in the sun for five days and was completely sunburnt; my hair was growing out all unevenly and sticking out all over the place; I hadn't taken out my contacts in four days so my eyes were totally bloodshot; I'd had been wearing the same clothes for almost five weeks now—they were all tattered and fucked up. I was embarrassed that I had come to Martin's family's house appearing like a complete scumbag, so I took a long shower.

When I got out, there was a huge feast ready on the table. I ate until I thought I was going to have to puke—then Martin's aunt brought out more food! Martin saw my look, leaned over to me and said in English so his family couldn't understand, "You have to at least eat a little bit. They'll be offended if you don't." I picked up my fork and somehow managed to eat another bowl.

Martin and I stayed up for a while talking before we fell asleep. I told him about all the stuff that had happened at the gathering and he got really upset, especially when I recounted the shit with Patricia who he'd been penpals with for several years. There was nothing we could really do about it at that point.

16 Jan • Montevideo, Uruguay & São Paulo, Brazil

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Martin took me on the fastest tour of Montevideo that anybody's probably ever gotten. We practically sprinted through the entire city in four hours. One of our stops was a vegetarian restaurant with a buffet that we walked into about five minutes before closing. They were kind enough to let us stay. It was the best food I've ever had at a vegetarian restaurant—the fake milanesa sandwiches with lemon were the most amazing dish I'd had since tasting the portobello mushroom sandwiches at the Mango Grill in Madison. We got to the airport about two hours before departure, but the whole time we were running around, checking in and dealing with our bags. The zipper on one of my bags had been broken since Santiago, so I got it wrapped in plastic—only for it to be torn open by customs later.

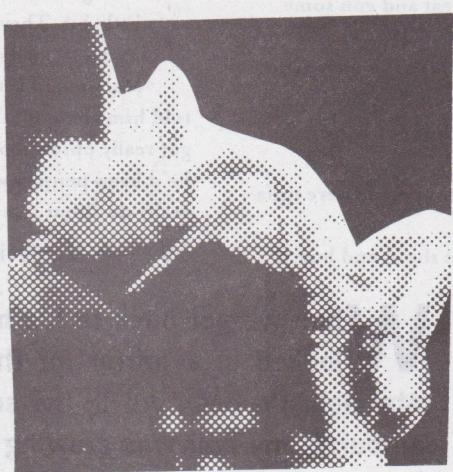
Alex picked us up from the airport in São Paulo. Juan had made it back there a day or two prior. We met up with him at the Rot practice space. We were all pretty exhausted. After some food and conversation, we crashed at Josimas' place.

17 Jan • São Paulo, Brazil – 18 Jan Chicago, IL

Angelo and Josimas took us to the airport again. Even though we got there very early, we still had to rush around like mad to get everything done. The lines were huge and we barely boarded on time. The trip back home was a nightmare—luggage lost, hassled by customs, missed flights, no vegetarian meals. We finally got into Chicago around 11 in the morning. Everyone just wanted to relax. I had two weeks to get ready to go to Europe. Welcome home. ☺

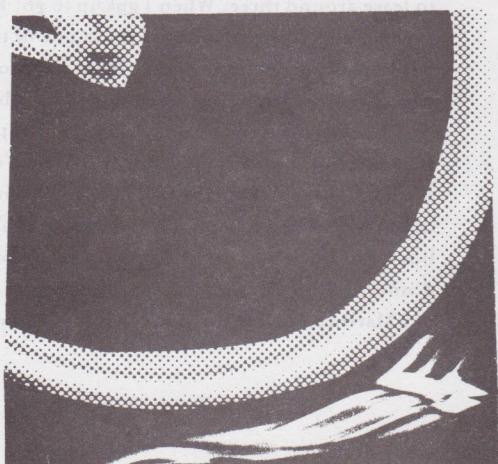
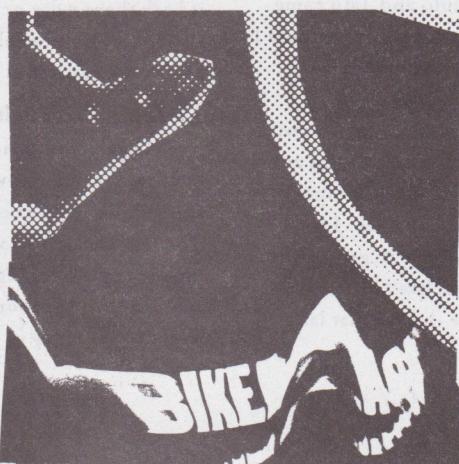
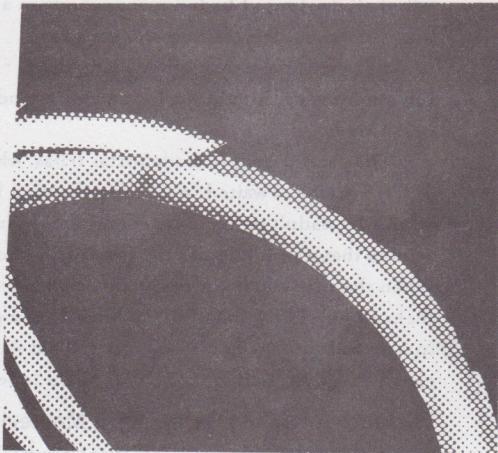
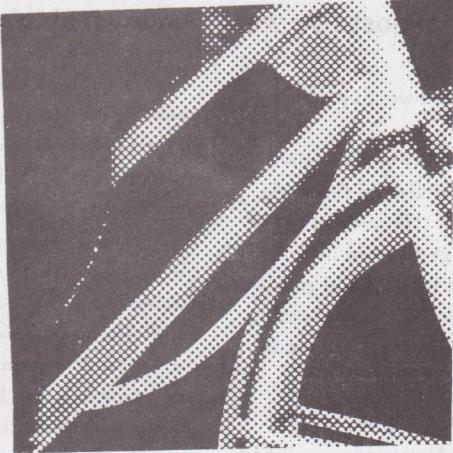
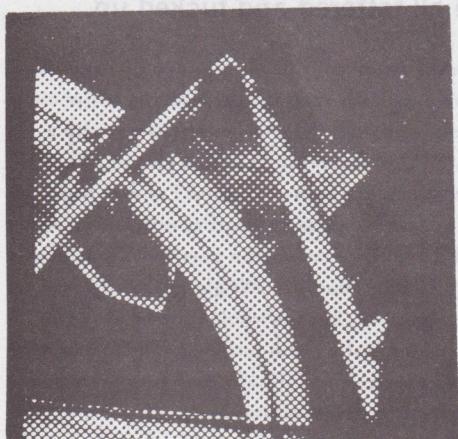


BIKEAGE



Article: Eric Weddle
Photos: Chris Bennett

THE BLOOMINGTON INDIANA COMMUNITY BICYCLE PROJECT: AN EXPERIMENT IN SHARING



This is a story about struggling against apathy while trying to teach a community one of life's basic ideas: to share. This is not a success story or a triumphant saga—if anything, it's something of a tragedy. It is a story that probably won't encourage many to follow in the footsteps of David Milewski for fear of the same obstacles arising. But hopefully it is a story that will encourage a few to try—and many more to think about—the issues it brings up. Plus, it's a good story, one that contains a hundred or so bikes, piles of gears and the color yellow.

"Ownership is overrated," David Milewski said during our first interview for this article in early May. As the instigator behind Bloomington, Indiana's Community Bicycle Project, 19 year old Milewski was bent on introducing people to the concept of community property.

In order to fulfill a community activity requirement for his Indiana University dormitory, Milewski decided to organize the Community Bike Project. Quickly, however, the project outgrew his academic requirements and began to take on a life of its own.

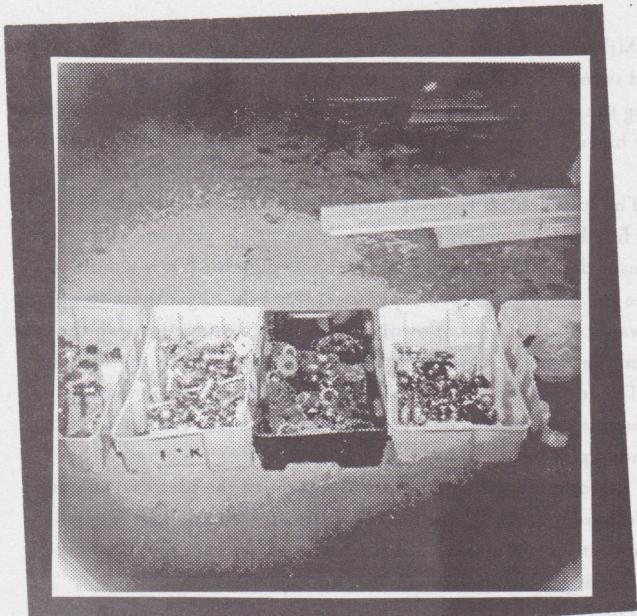
Somewhere between a kamikaze pilot and pied piper, Milewski's role in the project was always more that of an organizer rather than leader. In early '98 he ventured weekly to the local farmer's market and other spots around town armed with a hip-sack of photocopied fliers explaining his idea. Aided by his blanketing of flyers and constant evangelism, The Community Bicycle Project slowly generated utopian dreams of free bicycles and community property in many Bloomingtonites. Milewski's small college project was growing into a big hip-hip-hooray for the liberally spirited Bloomington.

One of the project's earliest supporters was Christine Glasser at the Center for Sustainable Living in Bloomington. Members of the Center had been talking for a while about starting a bike cooperative and decided to put their energy behind the Community Bicycle Project.

"I think it's interesting that the people who showed a lot of interest and support were older," Glasser says. "They weren't kids or college students, who I thought would be into the idea."

The first bicycles given to the project were donated from the Bicycle Action Project in Indianapolis. As these initial rusty frames and bent rims were transformed into rideable bikes and the project was slowly on its way, loose meetings began to take place on Saturdays at the public library, and it was decided that on August first all the bikes would be released into the streets no matter what.

As summer went on, the project picked up steam. Bikes were collected from a drop off spot at the county recycling center. A local bike shop went out of businesses and donated parts and supplies to the project. The local media took notice and applauded the community spirit that was under way; after an article appeared in the local weekly, the project was overwhelmed with donations of bikes, tools, supplies and even money.



Milewski made his front yard into a work space, tying bicycles to an old swing set to paint and grease them. Volunteers would show up during the week and help out by dismantling parts or adding new tires to the bikes in preparation for the release.

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The idea behind free—or “yellow” (so named due to the fact that many free bike programs paint their bikes bright yellow)—bikes began in Amsterdam in the mid ‘80s. The concept behind it is almost too simple for some to grasp: People use a free bike to get them to where they want to go, instead of owning their own. Instructions on the bike inform the rider to leave the bike at an intersection for the next person. The idea stems from the notion of creating urban commons, that people can actually be trusted. It’s an idea that can certainly be expanded past bicycles.

“Basically, this is a demonstration against the idea that someone should have to work a pointless job to buy something that they will use, at best, occasionally,” Milewski says. “There are plenty of used items rusting that can be made free and shared.”

The first free bike program in the United States began in Portland, Oregon. Other cities have followed in similar capacities: Austin, Texas; Boulder, Colorado; Syracuse, New York; Madison, Wisconsin; Charleston, South Carolina; Missoula, Montana; Orlando, Florida; Charleston, North Carolina; St. Paul and Minneapolis, Minnesota all boast some form of free bike program. But where most communities start the project for environmental or transportation reasons, Milewski’s goals went beyond those ideas.

“This project is about much more than bicycles,” Milewski says. “We want to spread the idea about community property. This is one of the easiest ways to get people accustomed to sharing things. It’s hard to be pissed off about a bicycle that you can ride anytime you want to. It’s something that costs nothing. It’s there if you want it.”

Most free bike programs are subsidized by state or local organizations. The Yellow Bike Coalition in Minneapolis—one of the country’s most successful programs—receives funding from state lottery proceeds. Bloomington’s project took on a different approach. Milewski wanted to keep it a strictly DIY operation using solely recycled materials to keep people’s money out of the equation.

“One of the most important values of the project has always been consciousness of the dangers of accepting money due not only to the compromises required to entice donors, but also to the counter-productive attitudes that the pursuit and application of money seem—at least to me—to encourage,” Milewski explains.

Though Milewski’s approach and anti-bureaucracy stance may seem self defeating, certainly seems pragmatic when you consider that a city like Boulder, Colorado spent \$20,000 to make 120 donated green bikes available to the public and within a few months, only 40 remained.

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On August first, a collection of 30 fixed-up and bright yellow bikes were released at Bloomington’s People’s Park to a small but enthusiastic crowd. For a few weeks, the yellow bikes could be seen scattered across downtown Bloomington and creeping on to the university campus. But almost as quickly as it began, six bikes were vandalized and others were seen being locked to racks. The bikes became hard to find, as people rode them out of sight or abandoned them.

“A lot of people have been informing me with disgust that they haven’t seen many yellow bikes on the street, as if we had failed.”

Milewski remarked in mid-September. “[But] the bikes released August first are a pilot fleet! A lot has been learned from them.”

With the first fleet small fleet released (and disappearing) on the streets, there were still many bikes left to fix up in preparation for another release. Friends of Milewski’s offered their garage as a permanent workshop to make meeting and independent working easier.

In addition to the garage-workshop, Bloomington resident Jeff Wilsey donated a warehouse for the bicycle storage. This donation held special significance, as Wilsey runs the Department of Safe and Civil City for the City of Bloomington.

“The idea [of the Bicycle Project] goes along with what the Dept of Safe and Civil City believes in,” Wilsey explained. “I was able to help as an individual,” he said. “I think it approves the overall community aspect of the city. I think it’s a great idea and I support bike transportation fully. I am interested to see where the project goes.”

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The accomplishments of Bloomington’s Community Bike Project are many: within eight months and with the on-and-off help of others, Milewski gathered over 100 bikes, acquired a donated warehouse, the support from a community and the notice of the press. But as of late October, most work on the project has halted—but the air hasn’t seeped out of the tires completely.

If you drive 10 minutes outside of Bloomington, the college students disappear and you are surrounded by open land. Sitting on a low hill, near an abandoned house is the donated aircraft hanger-like warehouse that houses the Community Bike Project.

Walking around the warehouse Halloween weekend, the mood is sullen. It’s been a long time since a yellow bike has been around town. Even worse, a crop of blue bikes—with their original yellow paint still visible in patches—have been seen occasionally. The feeling that permeates the warehouse is that of disappointment.

“It’s incredible that we have so many assets and nothing is going on,” Milewski remarks, looking around the warehouse. “It’s really depressing for me because obviously things are in motion and obviously we don’t have a shortage of bikes or parts or anything like that. I haven’t seen any [yellow bikes] in a long time,” David says quietly. “We didn’t know [when we set the bikes out] a lot of things but we have learned a lot of things now.”

Crammed in to the space are 115 bikes in various stages of decay, some bikes are sparkling new, some are obscure bikes from other countries. Tubs of derailleurs, chains, reflectors, brake sets and chain rings line the floor. These are the supplies most cities would love to have for their projects.

David tries to be positive, but with school pressures and everyday dilemmas competing for his time, it’s obvious that he’s staring at an uphill battle. “I’d like to get things ready, but it’s pretty much up to people in general. There are a lot of people who know where things are at and what needs to be done. It’s up to them too. Basically people are just lazy.”

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Initial hardships aren’t unique to Bloomington’s project, however. Charleston, NC’s Port City Bike program had their original 22 bikes stolen in under two weeks. The same happened with Austin’s Bike Not Bombs.

The Yellow Bike Coalition of St. Paul, Minnesota started their program in 1995 with 30 bikes—within two months only two

remained. However, the Coalition was able to recover and radically re-thought the concept of free bikes.

"Having bikes that are free is far too unmanageable," Laurie Lundy, executive director of the Yellow Bike Coalition says. Now riders in St. Paul sign a waver and pay a \$10 refundable deposit in exchange for a Yellow Bike card and key.

"We now use the Hub concept," Lundy explains. "We have Hubs at agencies or businesses and bikes are checked out like library books. Though we have problems with people bringing back the bikes, just like books."

St. Paul's unique "hub" concept has been successful. Three years after its rocky start, the Yellow Bike Coalition not only has bikes and riders, but money as well. In addition to Lundy's salary as full-time director, the group is able to also pay two part time mechanics and buy new parts when needed.

As Lundy sees it, the basic problem with the community bike concept is that people have trouble understanding it. "I think our society is past an utopian idea of having free bikes on the street," Lundy explains. "People just can't handle it." Unlike other public property like benches, playgrounds or sidewalks, bicycles seem more like personal property. After all, when did you ever heard of someone stealing a playground?

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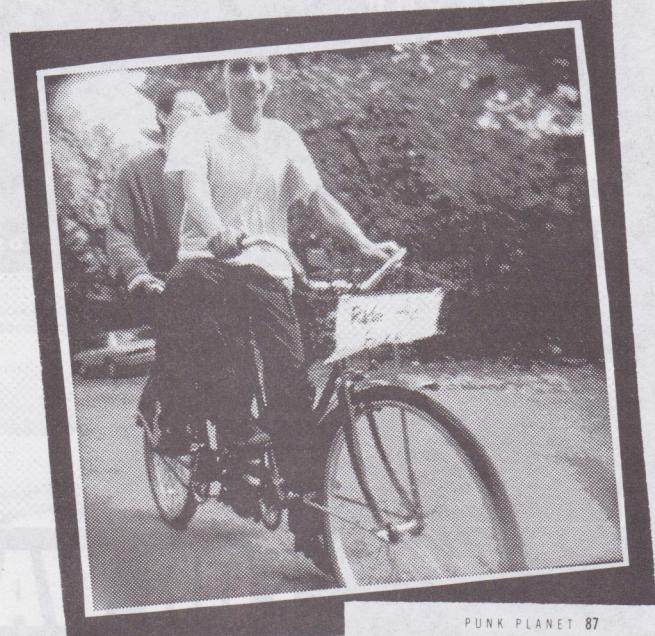
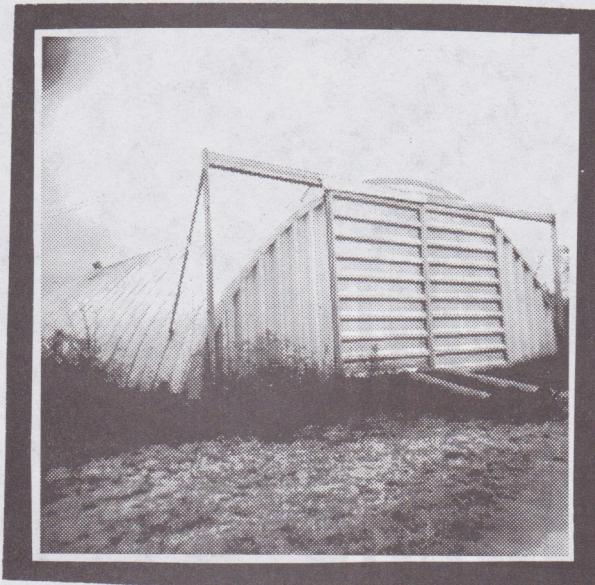
Despite the current problems, Milewski—and others—see a future for the community bike project. Standing in the warehouse, Milewski allows himself a brief smile and says, "It is still pretty impressive to look around and see all of this stuff. Things haven't been happening at the greatest speed lately, but we have gotten this far."

"Parking is a problem in Bloomington and there is a possibly the fines will be doubling in the future," says Wilsey, who donated the project's warehouse. "It will become more hassle to get around in cars people will have to look towards bicycles and maybe by then the bicycle project will be able to assist people."

While the current situation may be bleak, David tries to stay positive by putting the project in perspective:

"The Bicycle Project is like any sort of demonstration that makes people think. It may take a while—we may have to beat them over the head with it. It's a passive demonstration, but people are basically going to have to see what happens with the bikes, see how they feel about it, think about it and eventually get used to the idea. I think if the project does nothing but changes a few people's feelings about owning things and makes them think a little about what they buy, it will be a huge success. A labor intensive one, sure, but it could do a lot more. And at the very worse it fails, but hopefully it will make people think." ☺

For more information on the The Community Bicycle Project, contact David Milewski at 312 W. 14th St. Bloomington, IN 47404 or dmilewski@indiana.edu



READY

US intervention in Kosovo



by Joel Schalit

FOR WAR

During the fall of 1998, the American government announced that it was threatening military intervention in the Yugoslav province of Kosovo, where an ethnic Albanian guerrilla movement seeking independence from Serbia had been fighting since early spring. Initially rebel forces had made surprising advances, having seized over half of the territory from ill-prepared Serbian troops. But the Yugoslav army counterattacked, rolling back rebel gains with alarming intensity. Towns and villages were being raised to the ground. Several hundred thousand refugees were forced to leave their homes after having been targeted by heavy artillery. Civilians were starting to get slaughtered. It seemed like the early '90s was repeating itself all over again.

America wasn't eager to get directly involved in the fighting. It had its hands full already in Bosnia, where NATO was put in charge of rebuilding the country as part of the diplomatic settlement reached between the warring parties in Dayton, Ohio in 1995. At the time that America began to issue threats of intervention to the Serb leadership in Belgrade, elections were underway to constitute a multi-ethnic government under UN supervision. The last thing that NATO wanted to do was to de-stabilize its own three-year-old effort to rebuild the formerly multiethnic ex-Yugoslav republic with yet another war that would re-ignite tensions between Christians and Muslims again.

The straw that broke the camel's back was when the first evidence of a renewed campaign of "ethnic cleansing" had been uncovered in Kosovo. Twenty-one members of a Muslim Albanian clan were found horribly mutilated in the woods not far from their family compound. Unable to withstand international charges that the European Community was yet again unwilling to intercede before another quarter of a million Muslim civilians were murdered, NATO issued an attack warning, prepared its forces to strike Serbia. This threat of force won a temporary cease-fire agreement between the warring Yugoslav factions.

According to the terms of the ceasefire, federal troops and police forces deployed in Kosovo would be withdrawn and negotiations granting the primarily Muslim province political autonomy within what is left of the Yugoslavia would begin. The idea, as US diplomats explained, would be to restore the region to the status of a full province, which had been revoked by Belgrade in 1988, sparking not only the Kosovo independence movement, but also the gradual disintegration of the former Yugoslavia. Under threat of massive NATO air strikes, Serbia reluctantly agreed to go along with it, as did the factional representatives of Kosovo's fledgling independence movement who saw it as an opportunity to regroup for the next stage of the conflict.

It hasn't taken long for the cease-fire to break down. Kosovo Liberation Army forces have moved into territory vacated by government troops and proceeded to attack the Serbian military again. In order to appear to be respecting the terms of the cease-fire agreement, the Yugoslav government is staging mass arrests of Muslims suspected of collusion with the rebels and civilians continue to be routinely shot and killed on counterinsurgency missions. Despite the fact that it may have fallen from the front page of impeachment-filled newspapers, the crisis in Kosovo is one that can still erupt at any moment.

I continue to watch this display of violent political theatre with nervous—albeit involved—amusement. Nothing put me more into political crisis than the civil war in the former Yugoslavia did during the early '90s. As a Jew, a large part of me identified with the religious nature of the conflict, and how much of it seemed to be a replaying of

traditionally Christian genocidal impulses towards non-Christian European citizens. Now that Eastern Europe's Jews were gone, who better to turn on than Muslims, a cultural minority demonized world-wide as the Western world's new enemy.

Part of me wanted very desperately for the Americans to intervene and save Bosnia's Muslim population precisely because I still naively hoped that something had been learned from our failure to prevent the Holocaust from happening. But I was also reluctant to put America in such a position, because time and time again, from the Second World War to the Gulf War, I knew all too well that America only deployed its forces abroad to serve its own selfish economic interests.

My personal problem was that as much as I wanted some knight in shining democratic armor to come and save the day, there were no obvious alternatives to the status quo. Anyone who'd intervene on behalf of Bosnia's Muslims would do so with another pretext in mind. I rejected this because it was not pure enough, because there had to be, to put it bluntly, a *final solution* that worked this time. Anything else would be simply repugnant. But I knew this wouldn't happen, so I resigned myself to trying to figure it out personally in order to decipher what it was that upset me most about the conflict.

It came down to trying to figure out why it was that history always seemed to repeat itself. Somehow, if I could bust that problem open, I'd be able to see out to the other side, and perhaps get a sense that there are alternatives to feeling powerless and shameful. That's why watching the Serbs inaugurate yet another chapter of ethnic cleansing this summer against its last substantial Muslim population didn't make me search my soul the way that the war in Bosnia did. I'd already found a way to contend with it, in a manner that didn't just explain it away the way my political and academic friends did. But what it did do was make me recall precisely how I found a better way to deal with such vexing moral problems and still retain some sense of humanity in the process.

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It was July 1995 and I'd been working as a ship manager in the south of Spain for almost two months. Every time I went into town to buy groceries, I'd end up sitting through massive traffic jams. The problem was that I worked with Americans and Englishmen and despite the fact that we were in Spain, we stuck to a traditional North American 9 to 5 work schedule. While we were leaving work at five, everyone else was going back to work after their ritual afternoon siesta.

This time I decided to try something different. I left the dock at three, expecting to cruise down the road unimpeded. No such luck. As soon as I drove my beat up little Renault onto the highway, I got stuck again. This time, however, the reason for the congestion was different. As I looked out at the traffic descending the hill beneath me, I saw a line of olive green military trucks filled with ammunition, troops and .50 caliber Browning machine gun barrels poking out from underneath camouflage tarps that were supposed to have disguised them.

"What the hell is going on?" I thought to myself as a pair of charcoal gray and black USAF F-16s buzzed the ocean on my right. I knew from my Israeli army upbringing that it was rare for military convoys to use civilian roads unless there was some kind of large scale mobilization going on.

Once I arrived in Almunecar, I called the new captain that we'd just hired told him about what I saw.

"Oh, that makes sense," he said. "There's been all this military

transport chatter on marine radio today. It sounds like NATO is finally getting ready to ship out to Bosnia."

A week later, my girlfriend Cristina and I drove to Paris for a quick vacation. As soon as we crossed through French border control, we headed north for Lyons. Unlike the Spanish coastal highway, this road was relatively empty—that is until we looked in the opposite direction. Hundreds of tan, camouflaged French armored personnel carriers full of troops wearing combat-ready flack jackets were traveling south, heading for the port of Marseilles. They were followed by huge trailer trucks carrying Leopard main battle tanks sporting brand new, smooth bore 120 millimeter guns tied down to their chassis, sporting French military symbols on their turrets instead of traditional UN peacekeeping insignia. The absence of United Nations emblems meant this was a full fledged combat deployment.

Preparations for war had obviously begun. Armored cars would have been one thing. But heavy battlefield weapons like these meant something entirely different. Just by looking at the kind of gear these troops were towing around, I knew exactly what kind of situation the French army was preparing to get themselves into.

The last time I was in Paris, the war in Bosnia had just started to heat up. After an open air market in Sarajevo was bombed by the Serbs, my cousins and I ate dinner at my elder cousin Francis' suburban home watching French television repeatedly show footage of the blown-apart bodies of dead shoppers. All my elderly relatives could do was talk about the Nazis, and how they'd returned to Europe in the form of the Serbian Army.

It was difficult for me to stomach such comparisons because of how frequently persons of all political and ethnic stripes—Jews, right-wingers and leftists alike—use the designation of "Nazi" to describe anything that remotely resembles racism. I argued with my cousins about it at great length, telling them about how nationalism was being invoked in the place of Communism in order to compensate for the kind of identity crisis created by the collapse of state socialism in Eastern Europe.

"As much as leftists might object to this, myself included," I argued with my cousin Francis, "Fascism was linked to socialism. This is entirely different."

"Yes, I agree Joel," replied Francis, "But the genocide against the Muslims is the first time we've experienced anything like the Shoah in Europe since the war, so these comparisons, regardless of your scholarly hair-splitting, are entirely reasonable. Especially coming from the mouths of French Jews like myself who narrowly escaped the gas chambers."

I remembered how many Americans were thinking the same thing when the first reports of "ethnic cleansing" started to surface in American newspapers in 1992, after the Yugoslav Federation had disintegrated, and Serbia and Croatia decided to carve up the weakest former republic, Bosnia-Herzegovina. Around that time, reports started to filter in about the existence of Serbian and Croatian concentration camps like Omarska, where Muslim civilians were slowly being starved to death; of pitched battles in major cities like Vukovar, where the entire focus of the fighting was the elimination of the Croat civilian population; and how soldiers on every side of the warring equation brutally raped female prisoners to prevent their enemies from biologically reproducing their own kind.

Every politician, statesman, journalist and scholar who wrote

about the conflict at the time was absolutely incredulous to the new lack of civility in the western world. "How could this be happening again in modern Europe?" they asked. Especially in a country like the former Yugoslavia, which had been the most politically progressive and multicultural Communist nation during the Cold War. It seemed like the clock had been turned back to 1939. Regardless of the kind of political system that had given birth to it, state-sanctioned racism and genocide was back in vogue.

Nothing could better confirm Europe's regression back to its old barbarous ways than what we saw on television the next morning as we sat and ate our breakfast in the motel dining room.

Exhausted from the previous day's 12-hour drive, Cristina and I drank pot after pot of coffee while we tried to read the daily leftist newspaper *Liberation*. We pulled apart hot croissants with our fingers, sipped fresh orange juice, softly kissed each other, and savored the idea that we were in love in France with a fresh wad of money in our pockets, and only bookstores and museums to visit for four whole days. Then the bartender turned on a wide-screen television set that spanned the length of the wall in front of us. On came *Pas de Comment*, a silent documentary news program.

The UN had just discovered mass graves containing thousands of Bosnian Muslim civilians after the town of Srebrenica had been overrun by Serb forces. Their mangled, bullet-ridden bodies were still very fresh—the blood on their clothing hadn't totally dried. The camera silently followed the trail of corpses through each hastily dug mass grave, moving in closely to capture all the gory, beheaded details, then withdrawing to look at the faces of the disgusted Dutch peacekeeping forces that had been allowed back into the area to inspect them.

All of the sudden I felt terribly queasy. It wasn't just the brutal garishness of the program that upset me. It was how the graphic, silent documentation of violence made me feel about myself at the time: a middle-class American graduate student, on vacation in Paris with his fashionably bald Quebecois girlfriend, in an affluent European city, engaging in extremely refined cultural activities like eating croissants, buying books and wandering museums. I don't think I have ever felt full of more self-loathing in my entire life than I did that first morning of my French vacation. My cousin Francis was right: Violence is violence, regardless of what it comes from. Being old enough to bear witness to genocide twice in his lifetime was the only justification he needed to connect the historical dots between Nazism and Serbian nationalism. I looked into my café au lait as it grew cold, thinking about how much my commitment to studying political theory made it impossible for me to just call a spade a spade—particularly when the horrifying evidence of history repeating itself was staring right at me. I got up and left the table.

After we packed our bags, Cristina and I got back on the highway and drove to the Latin Quarter. We had no idea where we were going to stay that night so we parked near the University of Paris' Sorbonne campus in hopes of finding a cheap bed and breakfast. Everywhere we turned, we saw flyers advertising meetings of academic and cultural action committees formed around the war in Bosnia. Some meetings were scheduled to discuss the sexual character of the war—one flyer even announced the formation of a committee that had been convened to discuss geopolitics of mass rape. Others were calling for public discussion of Europe's responsibility to intervene in

the conflict and put an end to the violence once and for all.

The odd man out was a well-posted placard advertising a public meeting to discuss recent events in Bosnia hosted by the Spartacist League. I was floored. It was a call for the working class to defend the socialist government of Yugoslavian Prime Minister Slobodan Milosevic against Western imperialist attempts to derail his attack on Islamic Fundamentalist encroachment in the Balkans.

The poster urged the international working class to volunteer in the struggle against the rising green tide of European Islam. It was sickening how one-dimensional it was. But it struck me how similar this opinion was to the way many European governments really felt about the lessons that Balkan nationalism was teaching Europe's burgeoning Islamic community: Don't develop political aspirations or you'll be really fucking sorry.

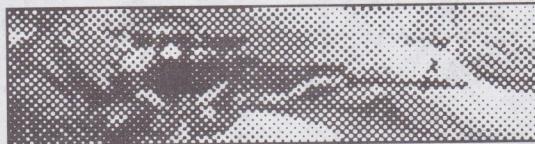
It made sense. Anti-Islamic violence throughout France was on the rise. Supporters of National Front leader Jean-Marie Le Pen had just murdered a North African immigrant several weeks before at a rally celebrating recent National Front electoral advances. The French government had recently passed a policy forbidding Muslim women from wearing their ritual headscarves in public schools. The German government was resisting granting citizenship to German-born Turkish Muslim children of first-generation guest workers, while neo-Nazi activists were busy beating up German Muslims in the name of combating Islamic fundamentalism.

The French Spartacist posters we saw pasted on the walls of Paris that day basically stated the same thing: Stop Muslim growth in Europe.

Due to my dyslexic errors in calculating the exchange rate, our money didn't go very far. After our third day in town, wandering around, spending more time taking photographs of anti-Islamic graffiti on the walls of Paris than looking at Louis the XIV-era paintings in the Louvre, we decided to make a mad dash back to Spain. This time we decided to take a different route, driving from Paris to the Atlantic coast, and then crossing through Pays Basque straight across the country in a 24-hour marathon drive. By midnight, we had arrived at the border—it looked terribly empty. Spanish passport and custom controls were vacant. Toll barriers were raised. We could have driven straight through, but I decided not to. The whole idea of crossing a border that didn't really exist was foreign to me.

"I don't know, Joel," Cristina said in protest. "It could be that the Spanish authorities are a bit more lax about such things than the French are."

I didn't believe it. After all, the French border police had subjected us to an identity check when we crossed into Perpignan from Catalonia. "It just seems too weird," I replied. "Here we are, on a continent exploding with all kinds of new distinctions—ethnic, religious, cultural, political—but we can travel into another country without even passing through immigration. I just don't understand it. And I don't want to get in trouble. Let's just crash here and get a fresh start in the morning."



The genocide against the Muslims is the first time we've experienced anything like the Shoah in Europe since the war

We spent the night in the car, in a deserted parking lot adjacent to a filling station. The next morning, I was woken up by the sound of a convoy of French military vehicles that had stopped for coffee, perhaps en route to another departure point for Bosnia. I scratched my eyes and looked out at them as soldiers jumped out of the creaky metal hulls of their camouflaged armored vehicles while Cristina still slept. I decided to place a collect call to my father in Tel Aviv.

"Dad, you wouldn't believe what's going on here," I told him. "Ever since we left Spain, there's been an amazing amount of military traffic on all the roads and highways we've been travelling on. It seems like Europe's finally on the brink of going to war again."

"Yes child," my father said. "I understand that NATO is getting ready to strike the Serbs, but there's been no formal declaration of hostilities yet."

"I dunno Dad," I answered, "the whole thing just doesn't make any sense to me. There's so much anti-Islamic sentiment here, I just can't seem to understand why NATO would be mobilizing to defend Bosnian Muslims."

Elie quietly laughed and answered, "Look Yoel, if you only knew how concerned the Allies are about Iran becoming directly involved in Bosnia, you'd stick your neck out for these people too. Just yesterday, some Israeli friends of mine told me that the Americans had seized several Iranian naval vessels in Croatia. They were full of Mujahedeen and military equipment destined for use by the Muslim Army. That's why NATO is mobilizing: Not because they feel obligated to defend the rights of Europe's token Islamic community, they just don't want Iran to get a foothold in Europe."

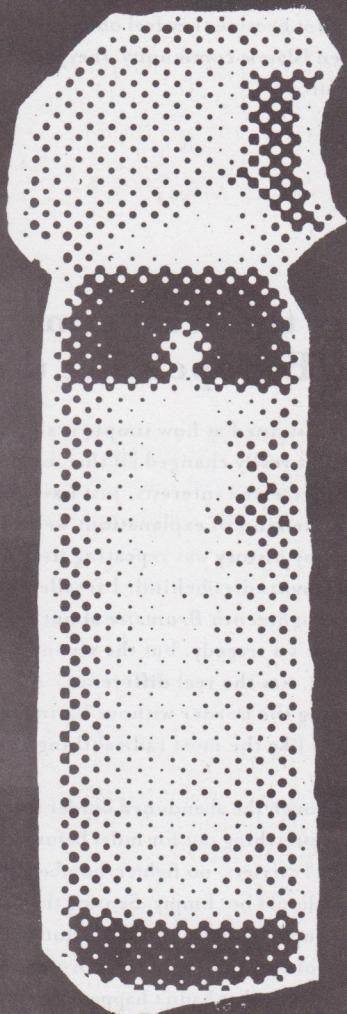
I hung up the phone, stunned at how simple it all really was. He was right. Europe hadn't really changed all that much. It was just looking after its own perceived interests, just like it always had. The only difference were the kind of explanations we all resorted to in order to figure out why history was repeating itself again. Never one to totally leave my studies behind, I recalled Marx's famous statement in *The Eighteenth Brumaire* about how the first time history repeats itself it's a tragedy, but the second time it's a total farce. That, I realized, was the real difference. All of the sudden, the idea of crossing the border without having to show a passport to anyone seemed like the most radical thing I could possibly ever do.

As we cruised freely through the abandoned border station, we could see an empty highway stretching out for miles before us. No tanks, no armored personnel carriers, no fighter-bombers flying overhead. Just the way it always should be. Empty. Sensing the irony of the situation, I sipped my first cup of coffee of the day, gunned the accelerator and began the final leg of our journey home. For a moment it felt like I was experiencing something that hadn't happened before. ☺

NON-LETHAL?

Evidence mounts that pepper spray, law enforcement's "harmless" weapon of choice, is anything but.

by A. "Twitch" Doubinn



On April 6, 1996, in the Mission District Of San Francisco, Mark Garcia, a 41-year-old drug counselor, was running down the middle of Cesar Chavez Street after being robbed and having all of his clothing taken. When the police arrived, they approached him by grabbing him by the genitals and emptying several cans of pepper spray on him.

According to testimony given by a gas station who witnessed the confrontation, the cops rushed to wash the pepper spray from themselves but made no attempt to wash the substance from Garcia.

Garcia was then handcuffed and placed face down on the ground where Lieutenant Gregory Suhr, according to his own report, stood on Garcia's back for a period of five minutes. He was then hog-tied and placed in the back of a police van on his stomach.

An ambulance that was nearby was told not go to the scene by dispatch because the police had decided to take Garcia to the hospital themselves. On the way there, however, Mark Garcia suffered a severe heart attack which led to his death.

None of the officers received disciplinary actions as a result of Garcia's death. Suhr, the officer in charge at the time, has since been promoted to Captain of the Mission Street station.

Two years after Mark Garcia's death, San Francisco's citizen police review agency, the Office of Citizens Complaints, has recommended that at least seven officers be disciplined for neglect of duty in the death of Mark Garcia. But as of this writing, no officers have yet been censured.

"The Police Commission and the police department have showed complete contempt for the Garcia family," says Van Jones of Bay Area PoliceWatch, a Police Accountability Group. "There is no worse torture than having to wait two years for even a hearing to look into the death of a loved one."

...

Oleoresin Capsicum, better known as pepper spray, is a mace-like product derived from cayenne pepper and marketed to the public and police as a "non-lethal" weapon. When sprayed in the face, pepper spray will cause temporary blindness and restricted breathing, and irritate the eyes and skin for 30 to 45 minutes.

Pepper Spray was first introduced in the US in the 1980s as a dog repellent for the US Postal Service. In 1987, the FBI claimed it had no long-term health effects and adopted it as an official chemical agent. From there it spread to local police departments.

Police say it's just another tool to help deal with violent arrestees. The National Coalition on Police Accountability however, says that the pain pepper spray causes is so intense that it should be monitored as a form of torture, as defined by the United Nations convention on "cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment."

The pain and suffering inflicted on victims of pepper spray can be so intense that it can result in death. While Police say the death among those sprayed is rare, the statistics show something different.

In 1997, Berkeley Copwatch, a police watchdog group, presented a report that said that the short and long term health effects of pepper spray are unknown and the manufacturer has misrepresented the health effects and dangers of it to the public. The report stated that certain components of pepper spray are known carcinogens and there are no studies that have proven that pepper spray is safe. The study

also stated the risk of death is even higher when a person has a pre-existing health conditions.

A Duke University Medical Center report by Doctor Woodhall Stopford, released in June of 1996, had reached same conclusion. The report stated that people with asthma, chest conditions, eye conditions, or airway problems would be more at risk of major health problems—such as eye damage, loss of skin sensitivity, and respiratory arrest—after being exposed to pepper spray.

In California, where at least 37 police pepper spray deaths have occurred in the past few years, the truth about this chemical warfare is leaking out. As the death toll mounts, local police accountability activists are fighting to ban the spray.

...

In 1988, a Jury convicted Sammy Marshall of first degree murder. He was sentenced to Death Row even though he was later diagnosed as being mentally ill.

On June 14, 1997, Marshall tied strips of his sheet around his cell door, successfully blocking the door from being opened. The prison guards responded by getting an extraction team and attempting to remove Marshall from his cell by force. One guard started cutting through the strips, while another sprayed Marshall in the face with pepper spray. When Marshall attempted to avoid the stream of spray by covering himself with his mattress, the guards sprayed the toilet bowl and sink—making it impossible for Marshall to wash the burning chemicals from his face.

It took 45 minutes to gain access to Marshall's cell, where he was handcuffed and placed face down on the floor. Lying in that position, Marshall had a seizure. One hour and 15 minutes after Marshall had been exposed to pepper spray, he was taken to the infirmary. By then it was too late. Marshall died without receiving treatment.

...

In 1997, progressive members of Berkeley's City Council attempted to get a moratorium on pepper spray use by the police

The National Coalition on Police Accountability says that the pain pepper spray causes is so intense that it should be monitored as a form of torture, as defined by the United Nations convention on "cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment."

department. The moratorium had been recommended the previous year by a special task force set up to look into liability concerns related to two pepper spray cases that the police department settled out of court, including one that involved officers spraying small children and their grandmother during an arrest.

The progressive council members and police accountability activists, however, failed to gain enough votes to bring in the moratorium. "The biggest obstacle we ran into was the police lobby heavily pressuring the city government to keep pepper spray in their hands," explains Daniele Storer of Copwatch. "The police gave the argument that smaller officers and women officers need it to defend themselves, and this caused one of the city council members to abstain from the vote. [If that council member had voted] it was essentially a tie vote. We were really close to getting it banned on the city level."

In Eureka, California, on October 16, 1997, anti logging protesters sat down and locked their arms together in the office of US Representative Frank Riggs, to protest the destruction of old growth redwoods. When Humboldt County Sheriffs Deputies and Eureka Police officers arrived on the scene, they began to swab pepper spray directly into the eyes of the protesters using Q-tips in an attempt to get them to disperse their protest.

The use of pepper spray in this incident violated the manufacturers' safety regulations. Defense Technology Corporation, manufacturer of the pepper spray used in the Headwaters case, has a pepper spray safety brochure which indicates that the spray should be used within four to six feet of the subject. If it has to be used at close range, the brochure states that its limit is three feet.

The entire incident was video taped and shown on the evening news repeatedly. It brought to the public eye the kind of suffering this chemical agent can cause.

"The use of pepper spray by police in California against peaceful protesters is cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment," said Amnesty International, "that it is tantamount to torture."

The protesters sued the Humboldt County Sheriffs Department and the Eureka Police Department excessive use of force. The suit ended in a mistrial in August of 1998, and a new court date was scheduled for November 16, 1998.

On Monday October 26, 1998, however, US. District Judge Vaughn Walker ruled that there was no need for a new trial because no "reasonable juror" could find that excessive force was used. Walker ruled that it was reasonable use of a pain compliance technique in the arrest of a resisting subject.

"This is very chilling and I think it should make everyone question whether this is the kind of society we want to live in," Alicia Littletree told the San Francisco Examiner. "Where some of the highest courts of the land actually justify and condone the use of torture against non-violent protesters and demonstrators."

Pepper Spray In The California Youth Authority By Siliva

In the California Youth Authorities, you are either housed in a dorm or a hall. N.A. Chaderjian Youth Correctional Facility consisted of 12 separate halls with 50 nine foot by five foot rooms. 25 rooms were on the bottom tier and the other 25 were on the top tier.

With one hall housing up to 98 wards, at times tension is definitely high. Through this tension and lack of respect and/or communication, fights were a common occurrence. Most of the time, it would be more than just a one-on-one fight. To break up these fights—or as staff calls them "group disturbances"—pepper spray would be used.

Pepper spray was used in the C.Y.A. as a form of restraint in order to break up fights or to subdue a would-be highly hostile ward.

The Human Rights Solidarity Committee and its parent organization, Bay Area PoliceWatch, kicked off a campaign this summer to ban the use of pepper spray by the San Francisco Police Department. It began with a few conferences in which people were given the opportunity to express their concerns with pepper spray.

Among those expressing their concerns was Mary Kate Connor of Caduceus Outreach Services, about the threat police armed with pepper spray pose to homeless people. Homeless communities bearing the brunt of pepper spray torture, she explained.

After the conferences, the next step was to take it to the police commission at a meeting of the San Francisco Police Commission on July 8, 1998.

Activists packed the auditorium holding signs reading "Jail Killer Cops" and "Police Commission Do Your Job." People angrily chanted "Fire Captain Suhr, Justice For Mark Garcia!"

Police accountability activists and relatives of Mark Garcia pressed the commission on the fact that they have not punished any of the officers involved in the death of Garcia, despite the report given to them by the Office of Citizens Complaints.

During the public speaking segment of the meeting, people confronted the commission on Garcia's murder and the brutal effects of pepper spray. Again, the call for a moratorium on its use until studies were done on its effects went up. The message was clear: Don't let what happened to Mark Garcia be repeated.

Unfortunately, it was a message that yet again fell on deaf ears—activists found the Police Commission completely unresponsive to their demands. But Mark Garcia's relatives as well as people concerned about police brutality let the police commission know that they will not let this issue die, and that police brutality and murder will not be tolerated, in this case or in any other.

It is a call that is spreading beyond the SF Bay Area as people begin to see the horror this agent can cause. World is spreading that this "non-lethal" chemical agent is anything but. ☺

However, other times it would be used carelessly for counselors amusement.

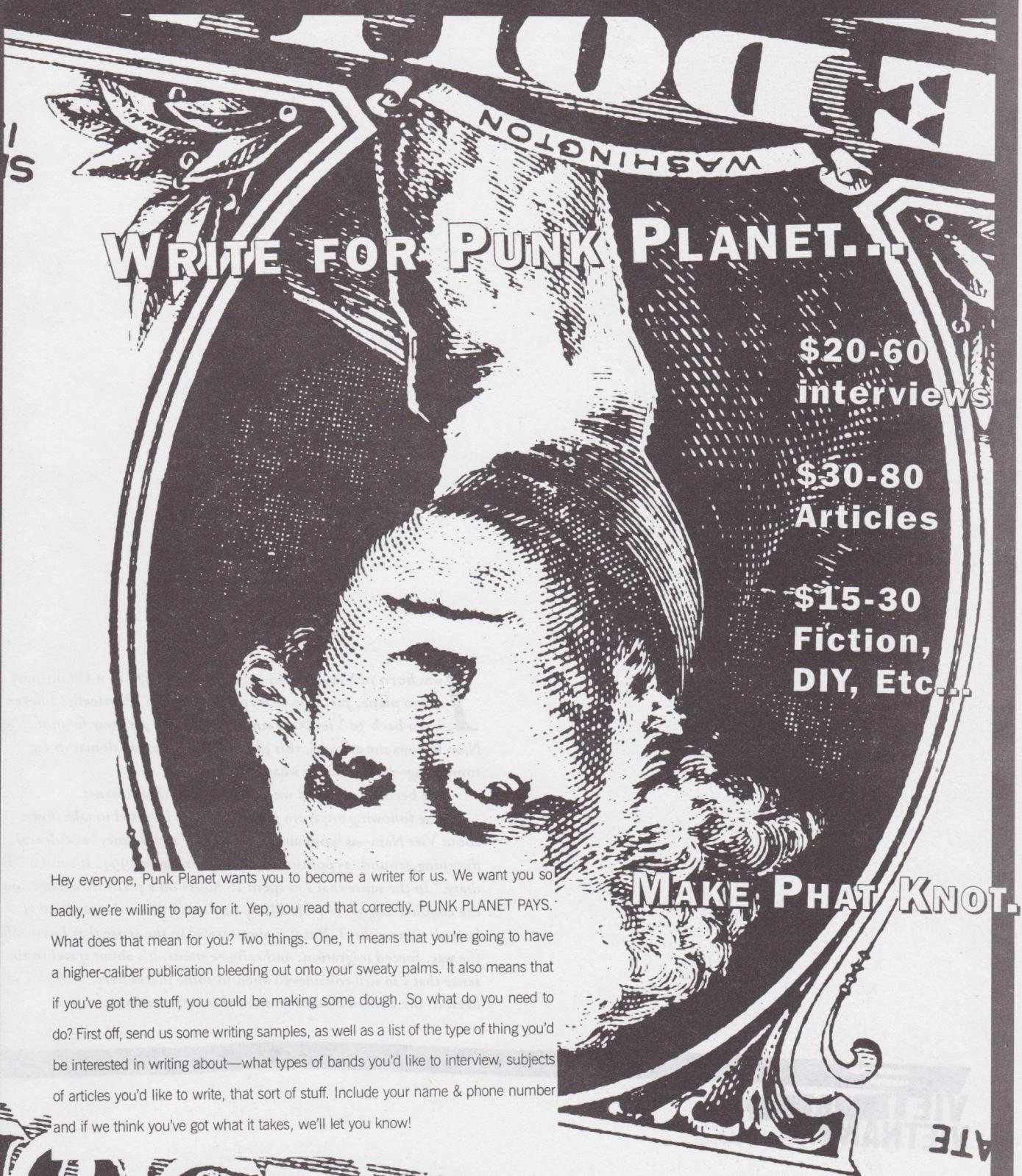
When pepper spray was used, you would feel the actual effects in your room. The air in the halls is circulated and recirculated through one ventilation system. That ventilation system brings the pepper spray into your tiny nine-by-five room. Most of the times the ventilation system doesn't even work or work as well as it should. Therefore the pepper spray would just stay in the air, hall and rooms. Bringing to all on the hall—even the staff—the same effects as if they too were sprayed with pepper spray.

If you were in your room when the pepper spray hit, you would quickly throw your towel that you shower with down on the floor to cover the space between the floor and door, put a shirt over your mouth, and lay

down and close your eyes so the burning sensation won't be that great since your eyes are closed. But even then, it was common to feel the effects of the spray bringing tears to your eyes, burning your lungs, causing shortness of breath as well as the nauseating feeling you get from the smell of it.

When the spray is used, most of the times the people using the spray have no idea if the person being sprayed is allergic or sensitive to the spray. The spray can also be very problematic for people with asthma since it causes a shortness of breath. For those with asthmatic conditions, I really feel sorry for you if you were around when pepper spray is used. ☺

Siliva has just been released from the California Youth Authority/ N.A Chaderjian Youth Correctional Facility, after doing seven years.



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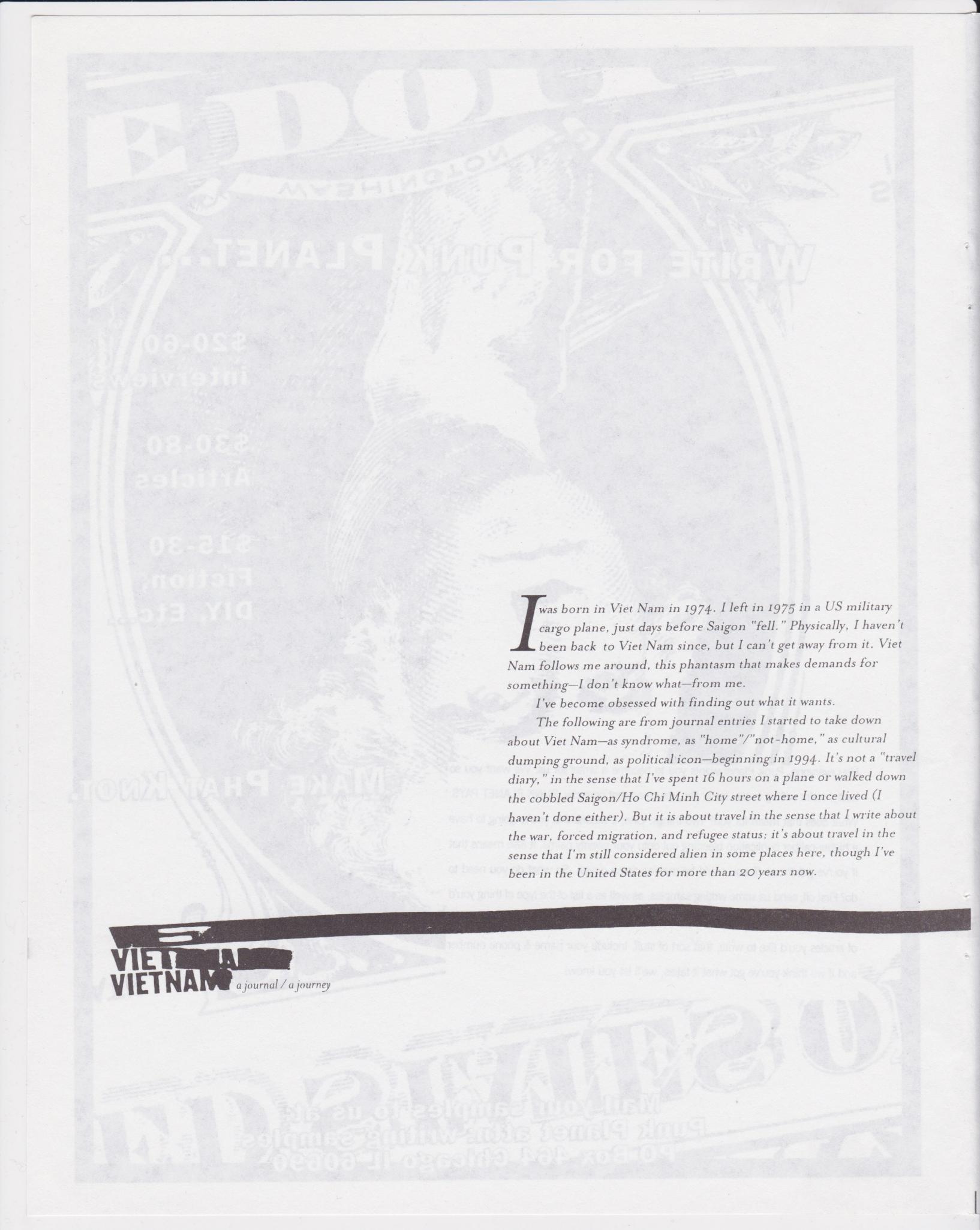
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VIETNAM
VIETNAM a journal / a journey

Iwas born in Viet Nam in 1974. I left in 1975 in a US military cargo plane, just days before Saigon "fell." Physically, I haven't been back to Viet Nam since, but I can't get away from it. Viet Nam follows me around, this phantasm that makes demands for something—I don't know what—from me.

I've become obsessed with finding out what it wants.

The following are from journal entries I started to take down about Viet Nam—as syndrome, as "home"/"not-home," as cultural dumping ground, as political icon—beginning in 1994. It's not a "travel diary," in the sense that I've spent 16 hours on a plane or walked down the cobbled Saigon/Ho Chi Minh City street where I once lived (I haven't done either). But it is about travel in the sense that I write about the war, forced migration, and refugee status; it's about travel in the sense that I'm still considered alien in some places here, though I've been in the United States for more than 20 years now.

February 17, 1994

The jingoistic insults —*Love it or leave it!*—hurled at war protesters in the '60s and '70s are echoed at my high school in 1991. I, as Vietnamese refugee here by the machinations of continued US military intervention in Viet Nam, joined 10 other students in a sit-down protest against continued US military intervention in the Persian Gulf. Having squatted the sidewalk in front of the administration building, we were approached by one hundred angry war supporters, many of them military "brats," spitting and screaming.

Why don't you go home? someone asks me directly. It's an ironic question. *And why aren't you grateful?*

Where do I begin?

February 13, 1995

I got a letter in the mail the other day from my friend Dzung. I think he's brilliant.

Mimi—

I spent December and January in Viet Nam, mostly in Hue and some in Hanoi. It was a crazy trip, a really good but difficult experience. I got to know a lot about my (deceased) grandmother, a lot about the countryside. It gave me insight into why my dad is the way he is, why I went through what I did growing up. I have a lot of respect for it now and I think it's totally beautiful. But the question is, what does it mean for my life? Here and now?

It was also a little weird because on the one hand my relatives totally accepted me as family and loved me. But on the other hand there was a definite sense (especially on the streets) of "He's a foreigner—viet kieu." It's so fucked up no matter where I am: always a foreigner.

My mom tells me that when we visit Viet Nam (she always says we'll go), I'm going to have to dye my green hair black and dress like a girl—a "normal" girl, she amends.

I answer, "They'll know I'm a foreigner, it doesn't matter if I was born there. No disguise is gonna work, Ma." She disagrees, but I think it's obvious—something that goes way down this distance from where I began, down to the wet of my cells.

March 4, 1995

I read this in a book about Indian immigrants in Great Britain: *We Are Here Because You Were There*.

June 30, 1995

I grew up in a white working-class town outside of Minneapolis city limits. Not only was my family the only non-white family in the neighborhood, but we were resolutely bizarre, foreign and refugee. I

think I exuded this, enacted my alien-ness unconsciously, a disjunction of speech, dress, and gesture; Something about the way I held my head, maybe, or inherent in the way my limbs were attached.

Growing up there produced a litany of adverse conditions I could recite as instrumental: after-school fights, blood trickling from my younger brother's ear; poverty re-upholstered in yards of cheap discount fabric; mailboxes regularly victimized by baseball bat or cherry bomb; and hate letters from the blonde, blue-eyed twins next door.

Instrumental in the sense, then, that when I first saw mohawked, leather-jacketed punks on TV (the '80s version of youth-gone-bad before the now well-worn discovery of black, Asian and Latino gangs) terrorizing high school populations and decent, law-abiding American citizens I knew what I wanted to be. Vengeful, I wanted to be an aggressive spectacle and offend "good" (white) people with the doubled assault. I thought to compound my Other-ness, to control the character of my freakish-ness in a way I couldn't then pretend.

Never mind, for a moment, all the issues I have with punk. I tell this story when people suggest that punk is for white kids and anyone else is just whitewashed. It's pure arrogance, of course: why assume that I want everything the West (or whiteness) has to offer? That I can't make my own meanings, that I don't negotiate, counter-appropriate or re-define these things?

That is (pay attention), my involvement with punk has *everything* to do with being an angry refugee-alien me.

August 8, 1995

The 50-year remembrance exhibit of the dropping of the Nagasaki/Hiroshima bombs triggered a response. (You know they say "we" should've just bombed Viet Nam back to the Stone Age, *ka-fucking-boom*.) A charred, burnt body in stark black and white stirred my latent hysteria: I forgot to breathe. You were there when I stumbled, fell to the floor, shaking with the violence of my will to re-surface, to break the spell. There is nothing to say. Only the cavernous absence of the heart stilled in skewed recognition, if only for a moment.

August 25, 1995

I am trying to establish the contradictory conditions under which I have had to come to terms with my history and politics, since you won't.

I'm uncomfortably watching arch-conservative Vietnamese-Canadians publicly burn copies of left intellectual icon Noam Chomsky's *Necessary Illusions* in the bio-documentary *Manufacturing Consent*. They are protesting both the renewal of diplomatic and economic relations between the West and still-communist Viet Nam and Chomsky's own political analysis of the

by Mimi Nguyen

Indochine conflict. I'm angry because of the coarsely-drawn, racialized caricature of Cold War anticommunist hysteria they're made to reincarnate here—spitting, disheveled, and heavily accented, a bizarre alien foil against the casual, almost beatific calm of the senior Noam, a lanky white professor infinitely comfortable in the midst of his homey MIT office.

Even if I'm at odds with their political agenda, I feel sharply uncomfortable watching Chomsky off-handedly dismiss their protests. (It bears mentioning that at the time of the Cambodian conflict, he suggested that reports of atrocities committed by the Khmer Rouge were mere right-wing exaggerations.)

I recognize the colonial discourse being reproduced by a Left blind to the representational cultural politics of their media imagery (backwards, emotional Third World natives, civilized, rational Western intellectuals) and again, I feel the distance between myself and the white American Left growing.

October 5, 1995

When I was 10 and living in Plymouth, Minnesota, a white woman approached me in a Red Owl supermarket. She told me, quite calmly, that I had killed her husband before turning on her heel and clack-clacking away while my baby girl's heart drummed in my chest. While I didn't remember killing anybody from before, I was awed that this woman believed that I was so amazingly powerful that I might've killed grown men, or be mistaken for another 10-year-old who had.

April 16, 1996

Last time I was home, my parents showed me a video my mother's cousin sent. Filmed by shaky hand-held camcorder, the worthy occasion being thus immortalized on celluloid is the dedication of a "historical location" or shrine to an 18th-century ancestor of ours in Hanoi, Viet Nam, at the family house where he was born. He was apparently the Vietnamese equivalent of a mandarin and a poet to boot. I come from a long line of these, according to my parents. As I watched it, I wanted to be moved by the auspicious weight of History and ancestry, but it screened badly—just another long family function where I know none of the distant cousins and the speeches last painful hours. I watched as the amateur videomaker moved outside the house, panning down the street past willow trees and ponds. My father said he'd been down that street when, at 16, he and his family retreated to the countryside after his first and only three days of fighting with the Viet Minh against the French. He said, for all he knew, my mother might've been at the house at the time. (She couldn't remember.) Meanwhile voice-over wandered in and out of earshot as lingering minutes were spent, unfocused, on a yellowed portrait of said ancestor and a hand-drawn family tree pinned to one wall that fell from

ceiling to floor. I canvassed the wrinkled faces of stranger-family capped under scarves and misshapen hats, women my age in white ao dais carrying baskets of fruit wrapped in red cellophane, the occasional communist officer in distinctive olive uniform. I could've been one of the young women, my father said, if we'd stayed.

But of course, we didn't and I'm not.

June 26, 1996

My brother sends me a set of photographs: the face of a young Vietnamese woman through the window of a Vietnam-era combat helicopter; the skyward view from beneath old-tarp tents; my father and me sitting on a hard canvas cot under those tents, scratching at insect bites; a bright banner reading, exultant, THANK YOU, AMERICA! hanging from the lip of the main stage.

They are photos from the twenty-year refugee camp commemoration at the US Marine base Camp Pendleton, coordinated by the Vietnamese Student Association of Southern California. Officially, it was called "Operation Homecoming" or, in Vietnamese, "Nhay Tre Ve" (literally translated, it means "Day of Going Home").

Feeling something like an experimental monkey come back to the lab of my original indoctrination (measured, inoculated, tagged), I imagined myself subject to the pseudo-scientific scrutiny of my former "guardians:" how well have I, after approximately 20 years, adjusted to conditions of x, y, and z? If I were truly paranoid, I might still check my body for a microscopic computer chip implanted just beneath the skin, disguised as an innocuous mole or freckle, its artificial memory bank saturated with all kinds of obscure logarithmic data tracing the path of my migration.

I was—and am—disturbed by the invocation of that perennial American mythology: that immigrants and refugees are "born again" once on US soil. I'm frustrated by the amnesia: We are on a military base where US soldiers were trained to kill Vietnamese in a civil war, escalated to monumental proportions by the US government and yet it's claimed as home?

I am made dizzy by the implications.

I read somewhere that the most toxic effect of imperialism is its ability to portray itself to its colonized subjects as a gracious, righteous benefactor.

On a field they had erected oil-tarps and cots in a re-enactment of the refugee camp. We wandered beneath the heavy aroma of petroleum, trapped. "It was exactly like this," my dad declared, sitting down. I had nothing to say. My brother took a picture.

October 24, 1996

My mother says at the refugee camps I refused to drink the canned milk the base provided. She says this is why I'm skinny now. She says, affectionately, that I've been nothing but trouble since.

When I was 10 and living in Plymouth, Minnesota, a white woman approached me in a Red Owl supermarket.

April 4, 1997

I picked up this white girl's zine in a local record shop because I didn't have any of my own with me. I am in a new town and hating it because I've been here before. I hate the ugly, squat buildings, the smallish feeling of the so-called downtown blocks swarming with undergraduate college students and not-so fresh-faced gutter punks. Later I sit down on the mattress on the floor of my naked room and skim the zine's contents and I can't help it, I'm uneasy. She's written about her European trip as an "American abroad," making broad statements about "not belonging anywhere" and perhaps, maybe, it's not about the where but the who. Nothing, she writes, changes when you travel.

I'm slightly resentful, chewing on a thumbnail. The 22nd "anniversary" (it seems an inappropriate word) of my family's flight is approaching and I can't let it go, I mean *this*. She assumes "you" (me) is like her. She can because she's not like me, because she doesn't have to acknowledge that maybe, just maybe, not everyone "doesn't belong" the same way. That there are different levels specifying how I don't belong and how she (imagines she) doesn't belong. I get annoyed at the unacknowledged privileges of race and nation she invokes in these sweeping "truths" and maybe I'm jealous because I don't have the privilege of her kind of angst.

I protest: *Everything changes when I travel.*

April 15, 1997

I found this quote by a 26-year-old white woman, a resident of South Oklahoma City, buried in an old beat-up journal, while unpacking. I can't remember what book I pulled it from—something sociological, I'm sure.

I don't like them people [the Vietnamese refugees] being here. They have some strange beliefs and they can kill you with their feet... Can't we do something about them?

I am stunned all over again, reading this.

April 24, 1997

Twenty-two years ago yesterday I became a refugee from a war-torn Viet Nam. This year, a white Vietnam veteran sent me an e-mail wishing me a good anniversary. In some ways, he wrote, it was a revelation of sorts to be able to wish me this. And for me, it is something of a revelation to be wished this by a vet.

I feel a little old because I've been thinking about these things so much lately—realizing that my personal small-h history is such a huge chunk of big-H History. The enormity of "Vietnam" looms so immense, so intimate; I can barely watch it—as dramatic background,

as generational icon, as national wound—without feeling robbed, cheated of my due.

June 7, 1997

Did you know you could buy *The Vietnam Experience* as a series of Time-Life books? Today I had the opportunity to own the whole of it when I found the 20-volume set for 17 dollars at a local library book sale. It's the real deal. But I didn't have 17 dollars on me, so all I have is this journal. It's not good enough for the box office or richly-illustrated series that can be ordered, late at night, by phone with Visa, American Express, or Mastercard, or payable in monthly installments.

June 29, 1997

For my 23rd birthday, my mom thought: *a family trip to Disneyland!*

At the shooting range in Frontierland, I learned my daddy is a sharpshooter, trained by the French. He hits every mark, making the white cowboys dance, the saloon whores sing and the ghosts! They move behind the night-sky screen, mouths like drooping donuts, moaning.

I never knew this about him and can't imagine how I would've ever found out otherwise. That I did find out at Disneyland—the theme park that specializes in good ol' Americana, sugar-coated fairytales and shiny surfaces—makes it even more bizarre but weirdly appropriate.

Funny how two minutes and 50 cents reveal incendiary histories buried beneath the familiar amnesia of exile.

July 26, 1997

Because I'm obsessed with the idea of travel—as leisure, as "discovery," as luxury, as immigration, as exile—I checked out Lonely Planet's *Vietnam Experience* (available on video) from the local library. I go home, make some popcorn and sit back to watch. A young white woman stars and narrates, looking solidly collegiate, outdoorsy and girl-next-door. Stepping onto the street in front of a skinny Vietnamese *cyclo* driver, she warns viewers to set the price for a round-trip pedicab ride before climbing aboard. She settles on 10,000 *dong*, or one US dollar, in her own pigeon-English haggling. She sets an example for shrewd, tactical tourism: Otherwise, she says in voice-over, you might end up paying *four times as much*. This said as she sits backs, the *cyclo* driver steadily pedaling away from the camera.

Four dollars is a fortune in Viet Nam. The average yearly income, estimated optimistically, is equivalent to 250 US dollars. Watching, I think, God forbid your globe-trotting, rich white ass should pay more than a dollar for a *cyclo* driver's sweat. *Bitch.*

She told me, quite calmly, that I had killed her husband before turning on her heel and clack-clacking away.

November 14, 1997

In skewed conversation with a white male co-worker, he describes his mini-safaris through the flourescent-lit jungles of Little Saigon's markets, journeying into unknown territories far afield from comfortable Orange County suburbs. With relish he, a suburban Indiana Jones, maps culinary exotica, sweeping across continents of aisles and dipping into the vocabulary of adventurism to ponder the benefits of "visiting" other cultures, made available through encounters with live squid or fermented bean curd. He expects this gives us something in common. I, in a Marxist mood, think murderous thoughts about the numerous phantoms involved. *We are here because you were there.* But instead of delivering the devastating pronouncement, "My aunt does piecemeal work for a sweatshop in Little Saigon making the confectionery dresses your fellow suburbanites wore to Spring Fling," I walk away.

Some people can't see those ghosts.

Speaking of food, the local weeklies have recently reviewed several area Vietnamese restaurants. "Indochine" as French colonial hegemony in Southeast Asia is casually referenced by way of baguette and beef stews. The "American presence" on the other hand is positively spectral in culinary historical memory; the cooks just *turn up* here (by war, by whim, by wave of a genie's wand). It inspires in me facetious comments: *Never mind the war, where's the lemongrass beef?*

February 19, 1998

I'm sitting in a restaurant, eating fries. I have Foucault's *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* with me, but forgo the Panopticon and the "political anatomy of the body," for Raymond Feist's cheap fantasy novel *Darkness at Sethanon*.

"Excuse me, where are you from?" A voice asks me.

I turn. The middle-aged black man in the booth next to mine is talking to me. He is also looking me up and down, surreptitiously. Inwardly I groan because it is a familiar opening gambit, I've heard it mouthed enough times to recognize its motive, nothing short of "hey baby" in disguise. I think to myself, McDonalds is so not the place I would go to make new friends or cruise for dates. I decide to forgo the smart-ass answer (Minnesota) for a curt, "Vietnam."

"Oh," he replies, "can you recommend any good Vietnamese writers of Vietnamese history?"

For a second I stare. I think, "Oh, man, that's weak." I'm reminded of another pick-up line a friend of mine hears all the time in cafes around campus. Once it's confirmed that she's Chinese, she's asked if she can help with Chinese translations.

I say, "No."

He plows on: "Do you know any good French writers?"

"No." I turn back to my book, hoping he'll take the hint.

He gets resentful. I can tell he is fuming. It's common enough, men expect you to be available, flattered by their attention. They want you to jump when they speak; to open wide; they imagine you to

be public property just because you are out in public. We are supposed to make nice, be grateful, be submissive. I'm used to this. I expect the usual "bitch" or similarly derogatory muttering from him. I expect, *why don't you smile?* A suggestion that automatically inspires frowns. I expect to be accused of unfriendliness, another complaint about women I always hear. I don't care, I hardly want to be the accommodating Asian woman just to assuage a stranger's wounded male ego.

I am unprepared, however, when he says, angrily, "You know, a lot of men died fighting for your country."

For a split-second I am too stunned to say a word. I am caught in that contraction of muscles and tendons, suspended. Flinching. Slowly, "So what, you want me to be grateful? *Does that mean I'm supposed to fuck everyone who survived?*"

March 23, 1998

In Little Saigon I was a novelty, "exotic" with wallet-chain wrapped around my neck trapping dirt and sweat, truncated green hair, even though Little Saigon is as much a fiction as I am: a city council-designated site for reimagining "home." We are both nothing like we might have been elsewhere. I can't preserve, even as a possibility, what's been irreversibly destroyed in the process of war, migration, and decolonization. And still I manage to elude Authenticity—big-A intact—or more, it eludes me.

And so I wear my history of trauma differently, what of it?

June 13, 1998

My father wants to go "back" to France where he'd spent his college years motoring up cobbled streets on a Vespa, sharing a tiny apartment overlooking the Left Bank with two other graduate students, also originally from Hanoi, displaced to Saigon after 1954.

We are talking about the World Cup soccer finals and I am rooting for Brazil, while he takes the other team. "France," he explains, "is my country."

I look at him strangely and say, "What about Viet Nam?"

"They're both my countries," he amends.

So I want to know: *How does a colonizing nation become "home"?*

October 5, 1998

I was looking for a reference when I re-stumbled upon this quote I had underlined and starred—twice—in red ink, by Black British theorist Stuart Hall, a Jamaican transplant to Birmingham:

The classic questions which every migrant faces are twofold: "Why are you here?" and "When are you going home?" No migrant ever knows the answer to the second question until asked. Only then does she or he know that, really, in the deep sense, she/he's never going back. Migration is a one-way trip. There's no "home" to go back to. There never was.

I think, yes. ☺



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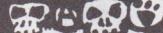
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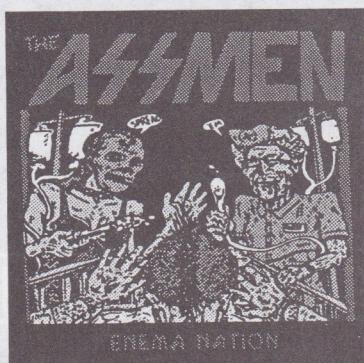
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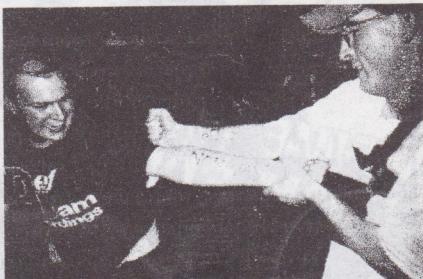
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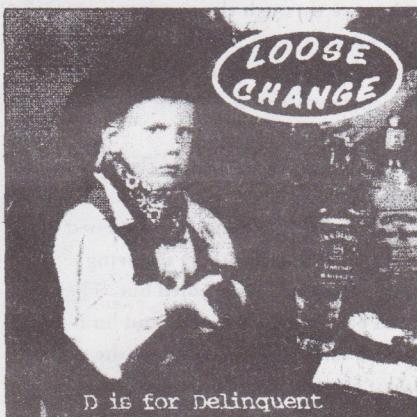
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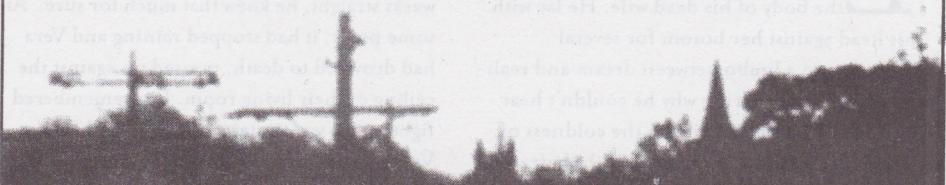
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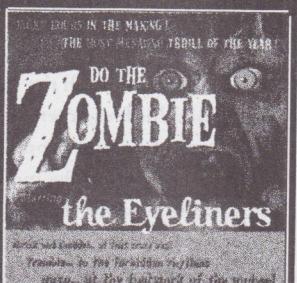
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Aftermath

by Holly Day

Lin woke up some time shortly after sunrise, arms tightly wrapped around the body of his dead wife. He lay with his head against her bosom for several moments in a limbo between dream and reality, drowsily wondering why he couldn't hear her heart beat, wondering at the coldness of her flesh and the dampness of both their skins. He quickly became aware that the two of them were not lying together in their marital bed of 35 years—not only that, but they seemed to be rocking back and forth gently, as if in a large body of slow-moving water.

He raised his head from his wife's chest to face a world covered with water. The steeple of the neighborhood Baptist church rose barely a foot out of the water about half a mile to his left—other than that, the town seemed to have completely disappeared. "What the hell's goin' on here, Vera?" he asked aloud. It disturbed him greatly that he was more bothered by the disappearance of the town he had grown up in than the extremely recent death of his beloved wife. Carefully, so as not to tip over, he moved up his wife's body until he was straddling her four-hundred-pound bloated girth and could sit upright. Far ahead of them were the peaks of the Blue Ridge Mountains, rising high above a brand-new ocean that spanned the horizon.

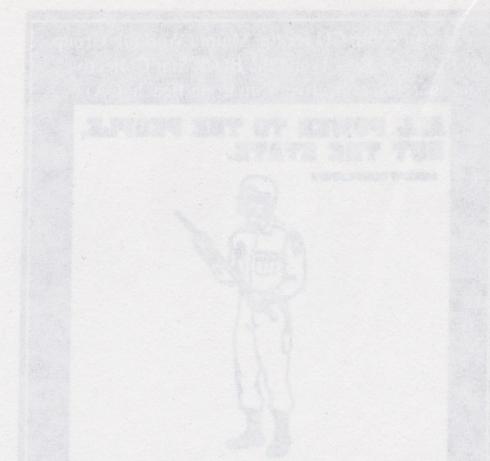
"That's probably where all the people went," said Lin. "All the survivors, that is." He kicked his feet experimentally in the water and found he could propel the two of them a little faster towards the mountains. It wasn't much, but it might make the difference between a few hours and a few minutes.

He couldn't remember when it had stopped raining. It had rained for at least three weeks straight, he knew that much for sure. At some point, it had stopped raining and Vera had drowned to death, pressed up against the ceiling of their living room. Lin remembered fighting his way upstairs to the second floor, Vera in tow, and then waking up here.

The mountains were slowly growing closer, although Lin wasn't optimistic about reaching them anytime soon. It took a good afternoon to drive to the base of the Blue Ridges, and he couldn't even guess how long it'd take to float there. The current was steady enough to keep them moving, but they were still moving pretty damned slow.

"Would'ja look at us, Hon?" he said out loud. "Guess that minister was wrong about the 'death do us part' bit, eh?" He dared himself to look down at his wife, half-trying to see her face, and was more than a little surprised and relieved to find she was actually lying face down in the water, and that he was straddling her back. What he had taken for her bosom was, in fact, the thick folds of rubbery flesh that padded her twin big-boned shoulder blades.

He was beginning to see that he was one of the lucky victims of the flood. The valley was choked with carcasses of livestock and fallen trees, often with small house pets clinging to the barely protruding branches, looking miserable and scared and wet. He hadn't seen any of his neighbors yet, but the remains of their settled, ordinary lives floated past him on the way to the mountains: lawn furniture, whicker baskets full of soggy sewing notions



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and brightly-colored yarn, magazine pages displaying smoky pictures of sultry models from both coasts, far away. A few newspapers bundled optimistically in clear plastic bags were hung up on the branches of a particularly large fallen tree. Lin recognized the tree as the Park Oak, and figured he must be almost to downtown Selena.

"I'll bet if I stopped right here and dove beneath the water, I could swim right up to the jewelry store and right through the window," he mused. "I could get you that necklace you always wanted, Vera." He tried to see through the murky water down to the ground level, but he was having a hard enough time seeing his own feet. "Ah, what would you do with a necklace now, anyway?"

A large white Styrofoam flat flew by, caught up by a small, quick current. A handful of drenched chickens were perched it, pressed against each other, shivering. "Hello, chickens!" Lin called out. They looked back at him, blankly, and huddled closer to each other. They were the quietest, calmest chickens Lin had ever seen. He looked around quickly for something to throw at them, just to get some sort of reaction from them, but couldn't find anything that wouldn't outright kill one or two of them. He settled instead on shouting nonsense verbs after them and splashing about in the water with his hands.

"If that ain't the damnedest thing," he said as they disappeared far ahead. "We may have to try to catch up with them later, in case I get hungry. Although I'm not sure how I'd cook 'em if I caught one."

They floated on in silence for a while, the sun climbing higher and higher in the sky. Lin was starting to feel pretty good about the whole situation, as if the sunlight was actually recharging him and filling him with real energy, instead of the jittery adrenaline rush he'd been feeling all morning. His stomach grumbled a little bit, but he really didn't feel like stopping and eating anywhere.

"I suppose, if I needed to, I could just dive down and swim into the grocery store and get something. Maybe I could steer us into one of those big trees and park, so I wouldn't lose you while I was shopping." He paddled experimentally to see if he could actually steer Vera's huge corpse and found it really wasn't too difficult after all. "I'll wait until I'm really hungry," he decided. "I think I can hold out until we get to the mountains."

They floated past the spot he knew the elementary and high schools were—it was strange to think that somewhere, far below his feet, was the spot where he had met Vera for the first time, back at a high school football game. He and Vera had both arrived at the game late, separately, and were forced to squeeze into a tiny space in the bleachers meant for one person. She was a lot smaller then, of course, and the most beautiful thing he had ever seen. He squinted and tried to see through the water again and wondered exactly how far down it was. "It must be at least a hundred feet deep," he decided. "Otherwise, we'd be able to see more of the buildings."

They began to pick up speed just over the deeper pit of the football field. Little

swirls of current grabbed Vera's trailing feet and swung them around, briefly, almost throwing Lin off in the process. He grabbed her thick, rubbery flesh tightly with both hands and held on. They floated backwards for a while, then another current spun them around until they were facing forward again. Lin had just finished thanking God for blessing him with an appetite for large women when he heard voices far to his left.

"Is that Lin?" one of them cried out. He turned his head and saw, perched in the branches of what must have been a gigantic tree, two thin, wiry figures, both holding on for dear life.

"It is!" cried the other figure. "Hey, Lin! Over here!" The figure waved at him with one hand, trying to stand up higher in the tree.

"Is that you, Terrence?" Lin struggled with his own seating and tried to kick himself closer to the tree. "I don't know if I can get any closer. It's kind of up to the tide, you know..."

"What's that you're riding on, now, Lin?" asked Terrence as Lin and Vera floated closer. "Is there any room on it for the two of us? Or just one?"

"God damn, that looks like Vera!" exclaimed Scribner, the other man. "How'd you get her to... Oh, she's dead, ain't she?" He shook his head and sat back down on the branch. "I think I'll just stay here until the National Guard or somebody comes along, thank you."

"There's not really any room for either of you, to be honest." Lin suddenly felt very self-conscious. He would have to get off and swim to the mountains, he decided, when

they drew close enough. He hadn't taken into consideration what people might think of him showing up, riding around on his dead wife like she was a dolphin or something.

"Yeah, that's fine." Terrence was flushed from his forehead to where the collar of his shirt met his neck. He looked away from Lin and Vera, looked toward where downtown used to be, instead. "You be sure to tell anyone else you see, someone with a boat, about us, all right?"

"Sure thing." Lin pushed his feet into the water and willed Vera back into the main current. He needed to get away from here as fast as possible. "I'll be sure to tell 'em to come and get you."

"Nice seeing you again," Scribner called after him. "Both of you."

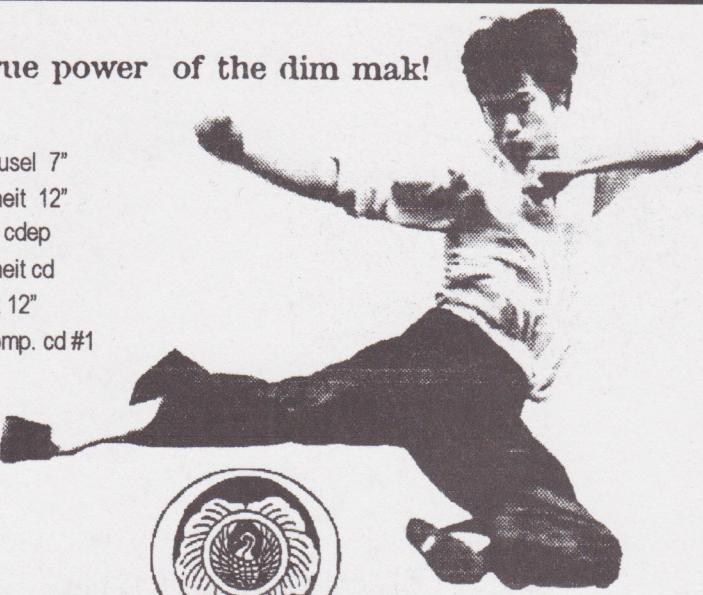
Lin felt his stomach tighten and his own neck burn as he pulled away, hearing the men whispering and snickering among themselves behind him as he and Vera floated away. The mountains were dead ahead of them now, barely an hour's drive and perhaps an afternoon's trip for the two of them.

Perhaps he should ditch the body now and try swimming for it. It'd probably be faster, if he could actually keep up a decent pace the whole way. And the National Guard could show up at any time, and he'd rather be picked up half-dead from exposure than napping on the back of a corpse.

It's a funny thing, a man's pride, he decided, reaching down and feeling the water with his fingers. It was cold and black with downed branches and sewer runoff, but it was still mostly just water. ☺

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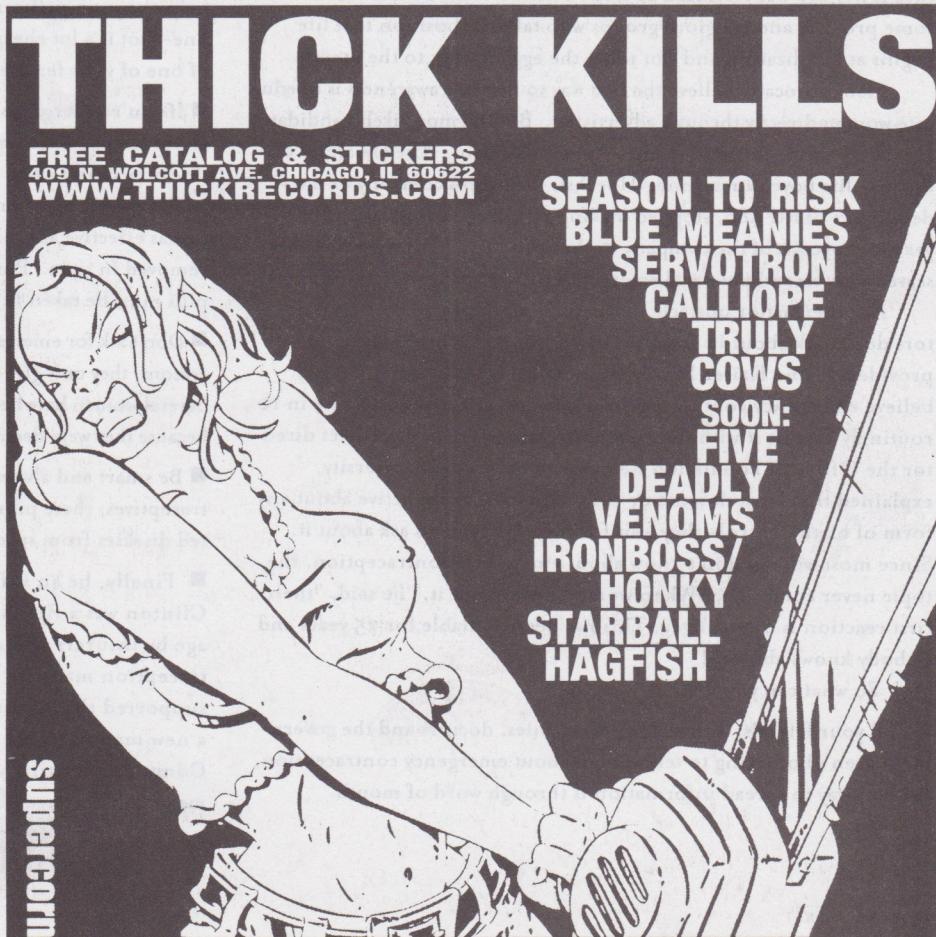
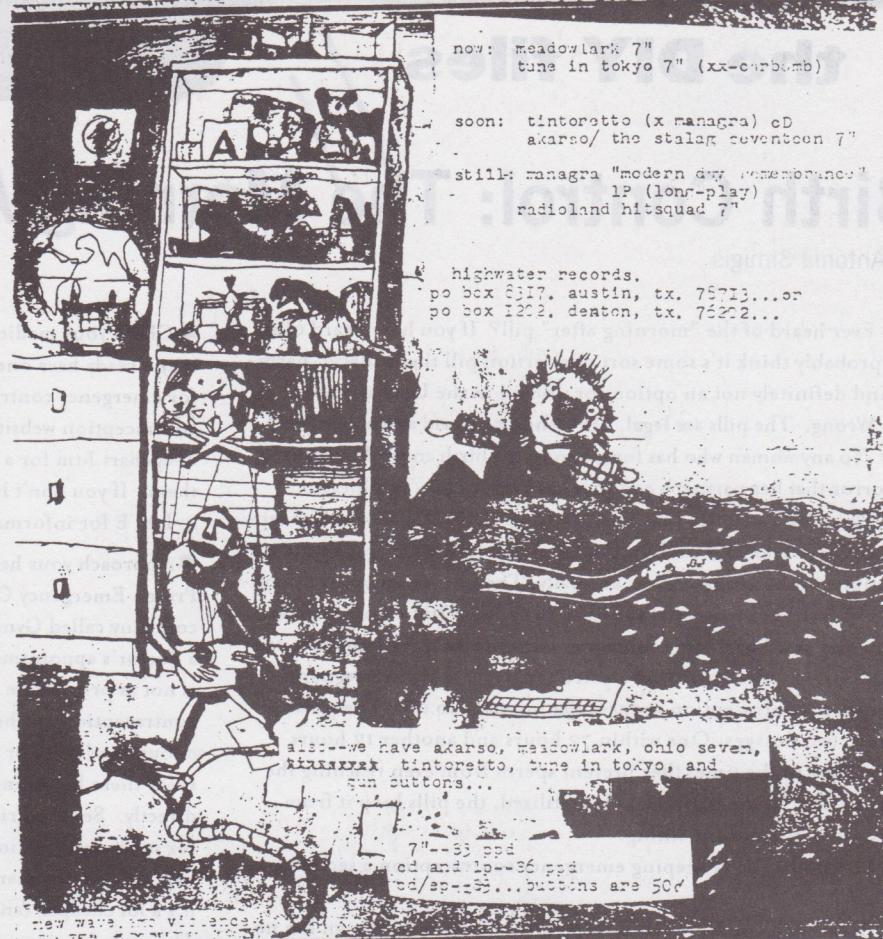
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Birth Control: The Morning After

By Antonia Simigis

Ever heard of the "morning after" pill? If you have heard of it, you probably think it's some sort of abortion pill that's illegal, harmful and definitely not an option for women in the United States.

Wrong. The pills are legal, FDA-endorsed, and available right now. To any woman who has forgotten to use birth control or realized in horror that her partner's condom has broken, they're a lifesaver.

Physicians estimate that widespread use of emergency contraception could prevent 1.7 million unplanned pregnancies and 800,000 abortions in the United States annually. The pills are commonly confused with the controversial abortion drug RU 486 because both are taken after sex, but they're fundamentally different. On average, out of 100 women who have unprotected sex, eight become pregnant. Emergency contraception reduces that number to two. The pills are given in two dosages: One within 72 hours and another 12 hours later. Most of the time, they prevent sperm from even reaching the woman's egg. If the egg is already fertilized, the pills keep it from attaching to the uterine lining.

So who has been keeping emergency contraception a secret since the '70s?

Because the pills are taken so early in the game, a woman has no idea if her egg was fertilized or not. That's a cause of contention with some pro-life and religious groups who take the position that life begins at fertilization and not when the egg attaches to the uterus.

Many advocates believe the best way to increase awareness is to educate women directly through advertising. But the most likely candidates for that project—drug companies—remain hesitant. They're afraid of the pro-life boycott machine. Hoechst, the parent company of the developers of RU 486, stopped making that drug in 1997 after three years of boycotts of the company's other products. This precedent has scared away several potential emergency contraception marketers.

Another major obstacle to the pills' widespread use is that doctors don't talk about it. A survey of 754 women's health care providers by the Kaiser Family Foundation found that while they believe emergency contraception is safe and effective, only one in 10 routinely discuss it with their patients. James Trussell, project director of the Office of Population Research at Princeton University, explained that most doctors or clinicians aren't pro-active about any form of birth control—they wait for their patients to ask about it. Since most women don't know about emergency contraception, the topic never comes up. "When women hear about it," he said, "their first reaction is often anger. This has been available for 25 years and nobody knows about it!"

So what can you do?

■ Tell your friends. Since drug companies, doctors and the government aren't bothering to tell women about emergency contraception, the best way to spread information is through word of mouth.

■ Check your medicine cabinet. If you're currently on The Pill, you may already have one of the FDA-approved drugs that can also be used for emergency contraception. See the drug chart on my emergency contraception website at <http://pubweb.nwu.edu/~aps860/drugchart.htm> for a listing of appropriate drugs and how to take them. If you don't have Web access, you can also phone 1-888-NOT-2-LATE for information.

■ Approach your health care worker and get a package called the Preven Emergency Contraceptive Kit made by a small women's drug company called Gynetics as a preventative measure. It's difficult to get a doctor's appointment within 72 hours of sex, and the United States is not as progressive as some European countries where emergency contraception can be prescribed by a pharmacist. (If you're lucky enough to live in or near Washington state, a privately-sponsored study there has licensed certain pharmacies to prescribe the pills directly. See the Princeton EC Website at <http://opr.princeton.edu/ec> for more information.) The Preven pack costs about \$20 and comes with a home pregnancy test. It's got a shelf life of only 18 months, but it's a lot cheaper (and less traumatic) than a \$500 abortion. This goes for men too. There's no reason you shouldn't be able to help out your girlfriend or lover if she gets in trouble. Plus a \$20 one-shot is a lot cheaper than child support. Buy a prescription off of one of your female friends.

■ If you're allergic to oral contraceptives, talk to a doctor or clinician about copper IUDs, or intrauterine devices. They've got some nasty side effects and a bad reputation (remember all those '80s urban legends about babies born with IUDs clenched in their fists?) but they're just as effective as oral emergency contraception if used properly and removed in time. Plus they can be inserted within five days of sex—the pills must be taken in three.

■ Don't ask for emergency contraception at a Catholic hospital—for moral reasons, they only give the pills to women who are rape or incest victims. Several women have been refused the pills in Catholic emergency rooms because they were deemed "irresponsible" for having unprotected sex.

■ Be smart and always use a condom. Like all other hormonal contraceptives, these pills don't prevent HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases from spreading.

■ Finally, be an informed voter. You might not like him, but Clinton was a firm supporter of mandating contraception coverage by insurers and a major reason why the federal worker's contraception mandate was signed into law last summer. He also supported the legalization of RU 486, which has a new name and a new manufacturer but still got blocked by the Republican-heavy Congress. Writing your senator and congressperson will also make a difference. ☺

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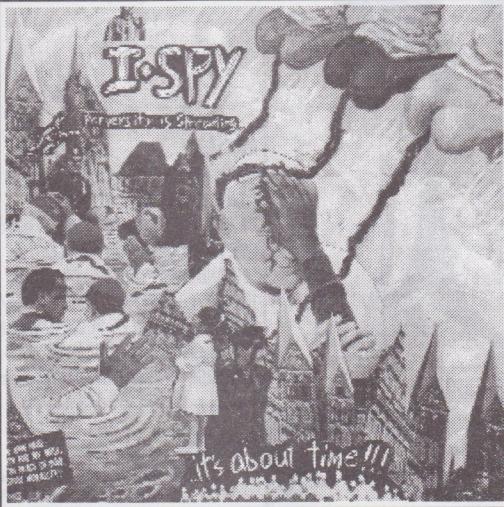
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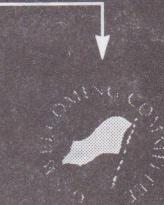
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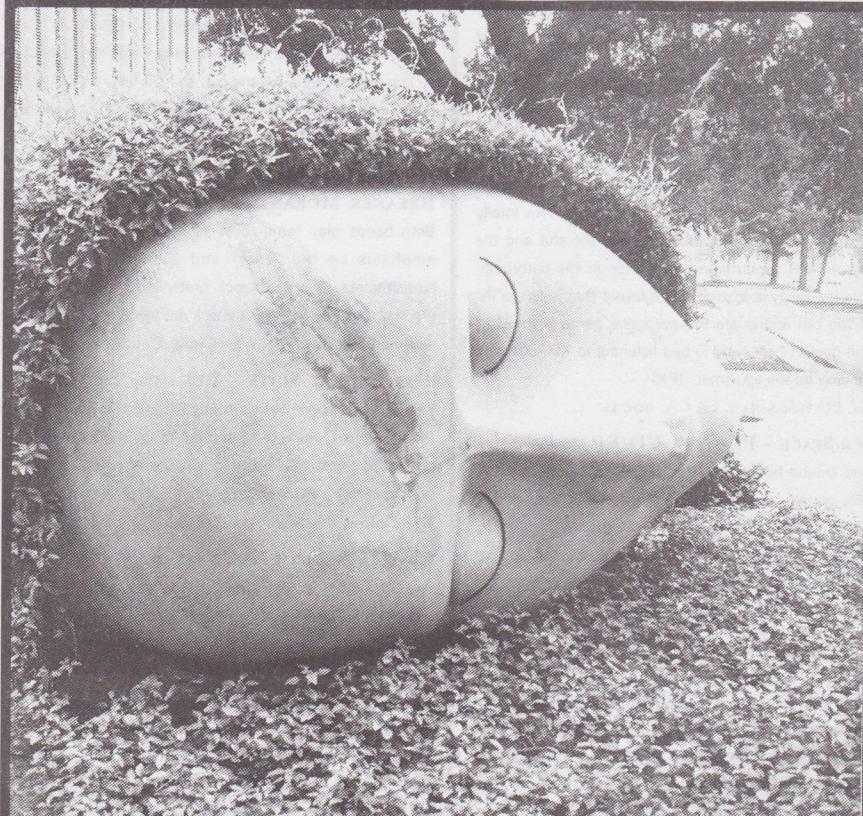


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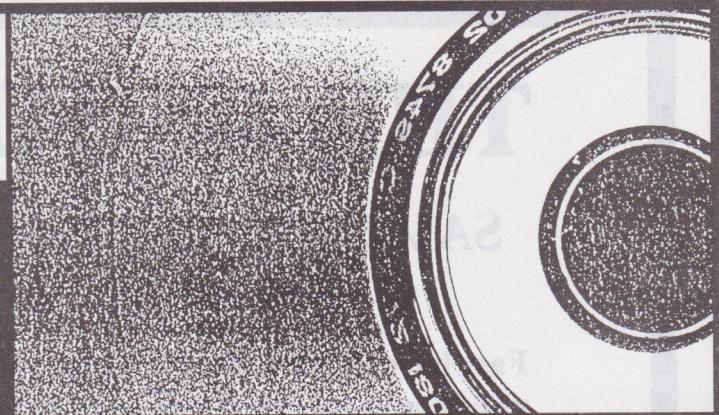
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PLASTIC MUSIC



4-STAR MOVIE - S/T, CD Excellent indie-rock that is, at time, laid back and mellow, but for the most part has a nice aggressive quality. Precision drumming, cool guitar lines, and an occasional dose of distortion make this one of the most entertaining indie-rock albums I've heard lately. (MH)

Poster Girl Records PO Box 146 123 Queen St W. Toronto ON Canada M5H 3M9

5 DEADLY VENOMS/JENNIFER - SPLIT, 7" Remember the buzz clips on MTV? The 5 Deadly Venoms remind of one a band that would have a buzz clip on MTV. I think they are trying to sound like Drive Like Jehu. Listen to your alternative radio station and you'll hear what they really sound like. Jennifer remind me of Hammerhead, but they don't do the sound well at all. It's on yellow vinyl. Just in case you need a yellow drink coaster... (SY)

TWR. 7306 Glades. St Louis. MO 63117

45 SPIDERS - MIZU NO OTO, CD Rhythmic, floaty space-like rock with some light male vocals and a nice instrumental flair. Not the most exiting thing I've heard in a while, but pretty good. (JK)

Deep Reverb. PO box Arlington. VA 22216

ACTION LEAGUE, 7" Impressive packaging for a band who is pretty rocking, in a "college rock" sort of way, but mediocre at best. Not bad, but nothing to write home about. (MD)

Dieselhead Records. 9349 Greenwell Street. Bellflower. CA 90706

ANONYMOUS - EASILY UNAMUSED, CD Classify this under unclassifiable, describe it as eclectic, and consider it good. Anonymous play some distraught hardcore with heavy rock influences and things you wouldn't expect to hear—like a blues sounding ending to one song. The music ranges from really speedy to slow and brooding. The vocals are mostly of the yell/growl variety, and work well with what's going on. The band almost completely avoids melody. Good stuff. (SM)

Doubler Decker Records. 803 St. John St., Allentown. PA 18103

ANTI-HEROES - AMERICAN PIE, CD Oh great, a right-wing OI! band. Tough guy street punk with a song about Bill Clinton that could've been written by Rush Limbaugh if he was in a punk band. "He's a taxraiser, promise breaker, adulterer! He's a draft dodger, liberal dictator, potsmoker!" goes the chorus. Another line: "Wants a gay man up the Army's anus!" Other songs about being raised with traditional hardworking values and about how Jerry Garcia is a piece of shit. Weirdest thing: Four ads for Atlanta businesses inside the CD packaging. Blech. (SM)

Taang! 706 Pismo Ct., San Diego. CA 92109

ASIDE - VICTORY DAY, SPLIT 7" French Hardcore-Thrash, a great record all the way from start to finish. Aside's hardcore stylings are reminiscent of Raw Power and DRI. The lyrics are delivered by two snotty-as-all hell vocalists, backed with reinforcing group shouts. Quick songs with great break downs, Aside's execution is tight. Search this record out, do what ever you have to until it's yours. (SY)

El Trasgo. BP 40111. 35101 Rennes cedex 3. FRANCE

ATOM AND HIS PACKAGE - BEHOLD, I SHALL DO A NEW THING, 7" Atom has two CDs of goof-ball songs and covers done on a music sequencer that are good enough to make you want to play it to all your friends, though they probably know who he is by now any ways. The best part is that Atom is throwing the punk rock 90's formula away and saying its okay to do something different (no playing what you are is probably not different). To the music – this single has a funny tune about the Metric system that has some great one-liners that I will not spoil. You also get a Dead Milkmen cover and a tune about the lead singer of Judas Priest coming out of the closet. If you don't hate goof-ball stuff, then you will like this for sure. (EA)

Vital Music PO Box 210 NY. NY 10276

BABYLON - SAFE EQUALS NO SOUND/TEST PILOT, 7" Hey cool, I didn't realize industrial bands even put out music in the 7" format. Well here ya go. This totally reminds me of a time when Ministry were the shit and the pink crimper was a permanent appliance in my bathroom. This is clangy-bangy industrial dance music that is fun to listen to if you can appreciate this particular genre of tuneage. But it still doesn't beat lying in bed listening to KMFDM with someone who makes you smile. (PK)

Mattress. PO Box 41349. LA CA. 90041

BAILTER SPACE - PHOTON, CD/EP Minimalist rock structured around bits of fuzz that accentuate and anticipate every note played, all keeping to a steady beat, is contained on these eight tracks of noisy, almost psychedelic, music. Deep, droning vocals complete the Baiter Space sound. The songs range from spastic to subtle and will surely bring out the rocker in you. (MD)

Turnbuckle. 163 3rd Ave #435. NY. NY 10003

BEDFORD - YEAR ONE, EP Like a faster, poppier Smoking Popes, Bedford plays sappy songs about girls. The vocals are like the guy from Smoking Popes, and maybe a little Morrissey, but faster, higher and slightly more nasal. Definitely pop punk. Four songs. Not bad. (SM)

System Untitled Records & Other Technologies. 55 Searle St., Pittston. PA 18640

BETTY'S LOVE CHILD - LOVE AND OTHER TRAGEDIES, CD This is catchy as all get out. A melodic pop-punk band that reminds me of a slower Rhythm Collision. The vocals are decent, the songs are full of hooks, and the whole thing is just clean. That said, there's nothing groundbreaking or original here—just a solid effort. (SM)

17th Street Recs 797 East St. John St., San Jose. CA 95112

THE BLOODY MUTANTS/ NOISE POLLUTION - SPLIT, 7" Both bands are way too punk for the main stream tinted P.P. These are distorted pissed-off Irish punks. Basic stuff from bands that you can tell how they are going to sound by their name alone. Noise Pollution is a little more pissed off than the Bloody guys, but not by much. (BC)

Rejected Records 9 Woodlandsave. Dun Laoghaire. Co. Dublin. Ireland

BORIS THE SPRINKLER - I'VE BEEN HITTIN' ON A RUSSIAN ROBOT!, 7" Two new originals and a Joe Jackson cover that is sure to make you get stupid like Rev. Norb. This is what you would expect from Boris except that the Casio found on this records made it stand out, so I can't say its just another Boris single, because this one is better in that the cheese factor is up one notch on the Wisconsin scale. (EA)

Lookout records PO Box 11374 Berkley. CA 94712

BREAKER MORANT/AMPUTEE SET - SPLIT, CD Both bands play "emo-core" as it were, though with less emphasis on the "core" and accent on the "emo." Nevertheless, they both rock pretty hard. If you are into emoting, then by all means check out this release. (MD)

Amputee Set. 1662 Highridge Circle. Columbia. MO 65203

THE CAPITAL SUITE - BEKAMPA TRAMSET, CD Falling somewhere between Fugazi and Nation of Ulysses (and there isn't really a lot of room to fall there) this is emo-rock at its finest. Well-crafted songs with nice use of distortion, feedback, and melodic guitar. Grab this one. (MH)

Old Colony PO Box 1424 Duxbury MA 02331

CAVE IN - UNTIL YOUR HEART STOPS, CD This one is for all of us who grew up listening to Slayer then progressed into hardcore. This is most incredible Cave In I have heard to date. The guitars remind me of Slayer's South Of Heaven era and then they fucking twist and get melodic in such a perfect manner that it sends a shiver up your back. Intense and they nail their dynamics down hard. The vocals are pain-stricken. I can't say enough good things about this record. Of all the shitty bands I can think of that try to do this sound, this is the only band that does it right. (SY)

HydraHead PO BOX 990248 Boston. MA 02199

CHAMBERLAIN - GO DOWN BELIEVING, CD SINGLE This sucks. (SY)

Doghouse America, PO BOX 8946, Toledo OH 43623

CHAMBERLAIN - THE MOON MY SADDLE, CD

I really don't know what to say about this. Rock-Pop with a vocalist that sings like it's painful. I tried really hard to listen to this all the way through but it just annoyed me too much. Maybe it has something to do with record companies trying to cash in on post-winter depression, but I sure have gotten a lot of these whiny emotional type rock albums this month. Bland is a word I've used a lot already this month but it's one that comes to mind when I think about this release. Not my thing, but some people may like it. (JK)

Doghouse Records PO box 8946 Toledo, OH 43623

CHETICAMP - AEROPLANE, CA Wow, handclaps, I'm impressed. Cheticamp plays poppy indie rock, good music for your next laid back, mellow get together. Nothing earth shattering, but a good release nevertheless. (MD)

Poster Girl Records, PO box 146, 123 Queen St. West, Toronto, ON Canada M5H 3M9

CHOPPER - LAST CALL FOR THE DANCERS, CD Pop punk that mixes it up enough to hold your interest all the way through the disc. The best is the classic rock stuff at the end. The cover uses a nice shade of blue that goes well with my eyes. (BC)

Crackle! PO Box HP49 Leeds, LS6 4XL, UK.

CHUCLEHEADS - OLDER, WISER, POORER, CD

Goofy rock that is well worth your attention. Listen to this and break your daily dose of Fat Wreck punk. Pop punk getting to be a little too much, then try this on for size. Good old fashion hits like "Don't Touch Me There (You're Not My Daddy.) Ahhh, does anyone remember laughter? And it has a nice sheep intro that is sure to get you southern punks all horny. (9 bucks postage paid baby!) (BC)

Croos of Gold Prod. 631 W. Broad St. 2nd fl. Quakertown, PA. 18951

COALESCE - FUNCTIONING ON IMPATIENCE, CD

Coalesce's "Give Them Rope" was a good record but did not fully become what I had hoped for. I wasn't sure what to expect with the newest offering of Coalesce, seeing as though it has been a year since I've witnessed a live show of theirs. Unbelievable. This record is too good to be for real. "What more do you want from me?" starts this seven song masterpiece off and I began to get goosebumps. Once the music began, Coalesce erupted from the stereo and visions of destroying everything danced in my head. It baffles me how one band can be so intense and heavy without being metal; yet, Coalesce has accomplished this feat with ease. Record of the year? I can see it happen. (BR)

Second Nature, P.O. Box 11543, Kansas City, MO 64138

COMPANION TRIO - S/T, CD I was so excited when I got this band's seven-inch. Getting a whole CD of their free-form jazz is even better. The Companion Trio make a real mess with their drums, horns and guitars, but not so much that there's no

structure to what they're doing. The structure is just extremely loose. The drums go pop, bap, boom and ding over here, the horns goes squeak and honk over there, the guitar plucks away somewhere else and then it all comes together and sounds smooth for awhile until it falls apart again. Impressive. (SM)

Mass Parties, 1843 Irving St. N.W., Washington, DC 20010

CONE - SMILE FOR ME, 7" Hey it's English sing-a-long punk rock. This is cool! It is refreshing to hear some people sing with an accent that is 100% real. Not like all these wanna-bees from the States who make me sick. 4 songs to make you happy that you're a little punk rocker and not some raver! (BC)

Crackle PO Box HP49, Leeds, LS6 4XL, UK.

CRESS/DOOM - SPLIT, 10" On the Cress side we've got some straight ahead raw UK punk with somewhat generic but well-intentioned lyrics concerning vegetarianism, culture, homelessness, etc. It's simple, no-frills 1-2-3-4 punk with super-crunchy production - catchy and easy to sing along to. If you liked their "Monuments" LP you'll probably like this as well. Thumbs up. On the reverse is the almighty Doom. I don't know, what can I say about them that hasn't already been said? Here are 4 more tracks of their trademark crusty hardcore that will make the kids go wild. I like all their songs on this 10" which I couldn't really say for all of their previous releases. They're one of those rare bands whose longevity and "success" haven't affected their ethics or attitude which deserves some serious props. Included is a pamphlet on the McLibel trial which everyone should read. Another fine record from the prolific Flat Earth. (KB)

Flat Earth PO Box 169 Bradford BD7 1YS England

CURBSIDE, CD Your typical angst-ridden-youth fast paced punk rock, dealing with issues ranging from being tough to hanging out downtown. Pretty punk, dude. (MD)

Skewed Productions, PO box 111085, Campbell, CA 95011-1085

DAGOBAH - THE GARAGE IS OFF LIMITS, EP

Occasionally I run across a pop-punk record that reinvigorates my faith in the entire genre. This is one of those records. The band has the idea—pop punk is fun music that makes you smile while you play it. But the genre is not so set in stone that you can't throw in a melancholy song, like the last song on this EP or start a song with a tender acoustic part, like they did on the second song. For the most part, Dagobah play a NOFX-style of punk, with speedy beats and quick stops. Best of all, one song is all about Star Wars. Nice packaging, too. (SM)

Crackle! Records, P.O. Box HP49, Leeds, LS6 4XL, United Kingdom

DANDELEON - S/T, 7" This German band covers much

ground and kinda' reminds me of Shudder To Think. (Or at least that's whom I think that I am thinking about...) Well, anyhow...they have three songs here that are well worth a listen. Nothing here to give you that annoying bitter beer face! It's all good baby! (BC)

HOBNOB, Rolardstr. 4, 33615 Bielefeld, Germany

DAYS GONE BY - S/T, CD Three songs, one an instrumental, of pretty modern-sounding hardcore. Very sparse in places, thick and screaming in others, with lots of pounding and stops and that sort of thing. Reminds me a little of Shotmaker. The cover design to this is brilliant, and the CD itself is painted flat black—see, there are still original ideas. Recommended as long as the price is right, since it's only three songs. (SM)

Electric Field P.O. Box 19394, Cincinnati, OH 45219

THE DESPISED NJ - 1999, CD Well, this definitely looks punk rock: black and white layout, flyers scattered about the cover and so on. I put this CD on and it definitely sounds punk: take your average Oi! band and crossbreed them with hints of Rancid, coupled with songs about beer, punk, beer, beer and oh yeah...beer. What made me reconsider my position was some of the lyrics : "She's one of Jersey's finest and she'll let you get inside her because she's nothing but a fuckin' slut.". This tasteless, playground sense of humor is not punk. I don't know anyone that would consider it such. (BR)

BP Distribution, P.O. Box 4377, River's Edge, NJ 07661-4377

DEV'L - DEV'L, CD Dev'l plays pretty interesting mostly instrumental material that sounds like something I've heard before but can't place, maybe a little His Name is Alive. The instrumental material on this disc is great, very moody and experimental. I didn't really care too much for the stuff with singing, although it's not bad, I just wish bands didn't always think they need vocals. Despite that, I like this disc a lot, the songs are composed very nicely, and it makes for good background music but is also interesting enough that you can really just sit and listen. Neat-o. (JK)

Dev'l 32 Locust Ave, Farmingville, NY 11738

THE DILLINGER ESCAPE PLAN - UNDER THE RUNNING BOARD, CD Three tracks on a CD seems like a waste of digital recording media to me... come on guys, put some more songs on there or put out a 7 inch. Then again, I don't think I could take much more than three tracks anyway. I'm not sure where grind ends and death metal begins, but these guys live somewhere in that neighborhood. Really fast, really loud. The singer(?) is going to need throat surgery before he's thirty... you get the picture... (harlo)

Relapse records, PO Box 251, Millersville, PA 17551

DREXEL - NO ONE TOLD ME, CD It's NOFX in their 'Ribbed' days, but a little more sloppy. Drexel, however, does a cool cover of 'Rainbow Connection' by Kermit the Frog and tries hard with a cover of 'Screaming at a Wall' by Minor Threat. The other songs are speedy, melodic and employ that pop-punk start/stop technique. Pretty good stuff if you're into this sort of stuff. (SM)

Fork in Hand, PO Box 230023, Astor Station, Boston, MA 02123

DWJ - S/T, CD I've always wondered why college rock bands bother putting out CD on their own label. I guess they use it as a demo to try to get signed or something. Boring hair rock in an early 80s style that I've been trying to forget from the first time around. (MH)

Slag Records PO Box 81-4321 Hollywood FL 33081

EBS/WAZOO - SPLIT, 7" Low-fi pop punk fun for your next party. (MD)

Town Hall PO box 974, Harriman, NY 10926-0974

ELECTRIC FRANKENSTEIN - I WAS A TEENAGE SHUTDOWN, CD I think EF are back with Scott Wilkins back on board. This release was released as an import picture disc awhile back. This version of the live slab was remastered and sound better (not great though). The thing with this band is that so many of their songs and releases are spread over so many releases that it always feels like I have heard it before. If you missed out on this record the first time, Estrus gives you a second chance. This one was recorded in 1996 before success was thrown into EF's lap, so expect a certain amount of unrefined Frankenstein. (EA) Estrus PO Box 2125 Bellingham, WA 98227

EMPIRE FALLS - THE LINES HAVE BEEN DRAWN, 7" Straight-Edge Hardcore bringing back the energy of the late 80's. There is even a great cover of Youth Of Today's "Stabbed In The Back." The guitars are a little quiet in the mix, but it doesn't take away from the drive. True to the X. (SY)

Groovecore, PO BOX 7478, Winston-Salem, NC 27109

ENTROPIA/AUT OF STEP - SPLIT, 7" Entropia play that special brand of Italian hardcore I love so much - super fast and crazy. The vocals are distinctive and totally insane - high-pitched and strangled sounding. They even throw in an appropriate Indigesti cover, paying homage to an obvious influence. Aut of Step's songs vary a bit more from the Italian hardcore thing (although their influences are still evident) with some slower parts while maintaining their raw sound. Really inventive and catchy stuff. This record keeps me convinced that Italian is the best sounding language for fast hardcore. (KB)

Tenia c/o Luca Mentasti Via Liancourt 30 22077
Olgiate Comasco Italy

ETTIL VRYE - DEBT OF DAY +3, 7" I can't decide if this is annoying or brilliant art-damaged indie-rock. Actually, maybe it's some of both. Sometimes I'm not sure if the band knows what they are playing, and other times it becomes obvious that they really do have an idea of what they're doing. This has an emo feel, with screamy vocals and sometimes mellow, sometimes rough instrumentation. Definitely DIY, with a piece of paper bag with the band name and song titles silk-screened onto it for a cover. (MH)

Mogano 8 Candlewood Dr Andover MA 01810

FALL WITHOUT FEAR - LEISURE LN., 7" Some pretty cool and quirky instrumentation on this release, but the overall college-rock feel of the record leaves me cold. The vocals don't do anything for me at all, but occasionally the band kicks into a groove that makes me feel. If I was grading it, I'd give it a C+. (MH)

Groovecore No address

FALLOUT - TALES FROM THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION, CD Sounds like the Strike with garage rock influences and a crappy recording. It's speedy, melodic rock with harmonious choruses and solid rock guitars riffs. Pretty good stuff, but would definitely benefit from a more balanced recording and more energetic vocals. (SM)

Red Menace Records, P.O. Box 65112, 358 Danforth Ave., Toronto, Ontario, Canada M4K 3Z2

FEDERAL OFFENSE - YOU THINK THERE'S NOT A THREAT ANYMORE, 7" While the lyrics are terribly generic, these guys shred in the manner of the early-80s Canadian punks The Neos. Manic hardcore with razor blade vocals. While on the edge of being generic, there's something special about this. (MH)

Uncontrolled PO Box 150206 Dallas TX 75315

FIENZ - COLE, CD This band has been around since 1987 and this is the first time I have ever heard of them. It's times like these that I feel like I am living in a bubble. It doesn't matter much though because I did not find anything striking when listening to this CD. The monotone style of punk reminded of All to a less exciting degree. After a awhile, I began to drown it out until the horns started to really kick in. Ska-influence is the easiest way to lose me altogether and this CD succeeded in doing just that. (BR)

BP Distribution, see Despised

FRANKLIN - S/T, 7" Catchy. I did not expect to get caught into this record as much as I did. The bass lines are predominate in the mix and have a dub feel to them. The guitars jangle and swell out on top. The songwriting is excellent and the A-side reminds me a lot of the Police. That's not a bad thing either. Franklin's sounds have changed since I first heard them, and the result is definitely for the better. (SY)

Tree Records, PO Box 578582, Chicago, IL 60657

FREE VERSE - ACCESS DENIED, CD Aggressive and pretty music made by three cool ladies who know how to rock out. I'd heard good things about Free Verse at the Chainsaw Records message board and I can see why the kids are digging 'em so much. Their music is purty dang punk and all over the place—at times reminiscent of Crass and Sleater-Kinney. They even send a tip of the hat to Bikini Kill with their cover of "Feels Blind". I do heart the chickrock. (PK)

Brain Floss, 1015 N. Kings Rd., #313, LA CA 90069

FUCTHAT - HERE'S TEN REASONS WHY, CD Another band that can be listed under the Fat Wreck sound. But this band would be near the top of the list of the bands that do it well enough to enjoy. And they are Canadian, so they get extra points for being an underdog in the scene. Lots of songs about breaking up with girls and all that gooey stuff. They have a talent of writing easy to sing a long with choruses. (BC)

Crack Records PO Box 29045 Eatons Place, Winnipeg, Man. R3C 4L1

FUN SIZE - GLAD TO SEE YOU'RE NOT DEAD, CD This is aggressive and energetic punk with a heavily pop influence. It's got some nice start and stop movement, and a well developed hook line and (dan) sinker to give you that catch required of the pop. (FE)

Fueled By Ramen 4407 lake hills court, Richmond, VA 23234

THE GLORIA RECORD - DROVE HOME TO THAT ACHINGLY LONG SONG..., 7" Sleepy-time emo. This shit is killing rock and roll. Sounds like a bunch of boys who are swell guys and just want everyone to feel their emotions and all that bullshit. (BC)

Crank 1223 Wilshire Blvd., #823, Santa Monica, CA 90403

GOOD CLEAN FUN - WHO SHARES WINS, EP

Yes! It's people trying to inject sarcastic humor into the straight-edge scene. The spirit of Crucial Youth lives on! Good Clean Fun are all about being straight, sharing their things and having, yes, good clean fun. They sound like Seven Seconds mixed with Minor Threat with gang-style "crew" backup vocals and screamed lyrics. Songs about being positive and people who are true 'til college. You know it's good just from the back cover photo—a guy getting happy faces tattooed on the back of his hands. (SM)

Phyte P.O. Box 14228, Santa Barbara, CA 93107

GOTOHELLS - BURNING BRIDGES, CD Hard driving garage rock and f'n roll. Take one part New Bomb Turks, add a dash of ZZ Top, shake and pour over cracked Supersuckers, serve, and enjoy. Good stuff for the guitar rock lover in all of us. (harlo)

Vagrant Records, 2118 Wilshire Blvd., #361, Santa Monica, CA 90403

HANKSAW - EVERYDAY I WISH YOU HARM, CD

Compared to a lot of things I think this is pretty good, yet compared to really good things, well... it's nothing special. Hanksaw plays what I guess you would call power pop, with pretty female vocals and nice melody. It's not that I don't like this, but it just doesn't really do anything for me. The songs are all right, I liked the Pat Benatar cover, but I never really found myself humming most them like I should with good pop songs. Overall, this is not bad but is not great. (JK)

Doghouse Records, PO Box 8946 Toledo, OH 43623

HANSI - S/T, CD Six songs of moody acoustic and quiet electric guitar indie-rock. At times, the vocals and guitars remind me of a male Liz Phair when she's being mellow. A decent listen for those times you don't feel like jumping around. (MH)

Van Squash PO Box 20909 Oakland CA 94620

HARRIET THE SPY - 2 SONG TOUR EP, 7" This one sided 7" is limited to a 400 press and I suspect it is the tour EP I have been hearing about. The two songs are great. Well played guitar lines driving the snotty pop nature of these songs while still falling into the hardcore sound. I have not come to expect any less from Harriet the Spy. Track it down. (SY)

Troubleman 16 Willow ST, Bayonne NJ 07002

HATARI!/HAMLET IDIOT - SPLIT, 7" Hatari! are a vocal-less mess. Tinny, disjointed guitars and drums slop all over the place, trying to sound angst-filled and coming off only as incompetent. Hamlet Idiot save the record from going in my pile of "vinyl that should never have been produced," but not by much. They lay down mellow guitar work over almost hip-hop drums and bass—again without vocals. They sound just weird enough to be almost cool. Still, avoid this. (SM)

Envy Recordings, P.O. Box 6118, Newburyport, MA 01950

IMPEL - OMNIDIRECTIONAL, CD It's part hardcore, part rock. Screaming vocals that are kind of annoying mixed with low, crunchy guitars. Occasionally the vocals abandon the screaming and attempt singing, but end up sounding like Doc Dart from the Crucifucks attempting to sing hardcore. Which is kind of cool, really. But alas, this is nothing great. (SM) Vinyl Communications, P.O. Box 8623, Chula Vista, CA 91912

IN/HUMANITY - OCCULTONYM, 7" I'm am a big fan of In/Humanity. The History Behind The Mystery album was awesome yet this stuff is too straight forward for me. The songs are great but I miss the weirdness of their past releases, in instrumentation and tempo. It's a good listen nonetheless. The included bookmarks are funny as hell. (SY) Old Glory PO Box 17195, Worcester, MA 01601

INSIDE - SEVEN INCHES TO WALL DRUG, CD My family and I went on a trip to South Dakota this summer and went to Wall Drug. If you haven't heard of it, Wall Drug is the largest drug store in the world, and pretty much is the only thing in South Dakota worth seeing. They have all this weird shit inside like automated singing cowboys, and apes and a huge dinosaur robot that roars loudly every ten minutes. Their main form of advertising is a huge campaign that places Wall Drug signs everywhere from Bangkok to Antarctica. All over the store they have pictures of people standing next to the signs which say things like "Only 1,289,882 miles to Wall Drug". Inside plays a whiny sort of emo-type rock, which unfortunately, like most things related to Wall Drug, isn't really worth buying. (JK)

Motherbox Records, 60 Denton Ave, East Rockaway, NY 11518, 516. 437. 6452

JEN WOOD/TIM KINSELLA - POST MARKED STAMPS NO.6, 7" It's hard to believe it was five years ago that I bought a cassette by a band called Tattle Tale that would change the way I listened to music then. Jen and Madigan made the most beautifully raw music together, and like many good bands, have since gone their respective ways. The Jen Wood song "Sheltering Arms for the Birds" is super-heartfelt with her elongated (for lack of a better word) singing style which kills. The Tim Kinsella song is actually a Promise Ring cover—"A Picture Postcard". Whether this side of the 7" appeals to you or not rides very much on your tolerance level for Tim's unique voice. Nuff said. (PK)

Tree, PO Box 578382, Chicago IL, 60657

JESUIT - S/T, 7" More intense then their Reservoir releases. A 3 song set of metallic hardcore, including a great instrumental. The sound is lurking and intense. As a label, there is definitely a Hydra Head sound, and Jesuit do more then their part to help define it. (SY)

Hydra Head Records, PO BOX 990248, Boston, MA 02199

JON COUGAR CONCENTRATION CAMP - TOO TOUGH TO DIE, CD This is the Cougar clan doing the Ramose record. So if you wanna hear them do such classics as Mamma's Boys, Wart Hog, and Chasing the Night, then get this. If you don't want to hear them doing this, then buy the Ramones record. (BC)

Liberation Records PO Box 17746 Anaheim, CA 92817

JON COUGAR CONCENTRATION CAMP - MELON, CD Your standard rapidly paced pop punk. Fans of JCCC will not be disappointed. Fans of street punk might be. (MD) BYO Records, PO box 67A64 LA, CA 90067

KARATE - THE BED IS IN THE OCEAN, CD This is by far the best thing I have received this month. Karate creates beautiful music that makes you think. A lot of this reminds me of the Minutemen, in both the free instrumental groove, and the style of the lyrics. Despite that comparison, Karate really has a sound that is all their own, something which is not common in today's punk scene. They create both an emotional and intellectual punch that most bands can't achieve. I really could go on all day about how great this is, but it would be in vain. If you haven't yet heard Karate, do yourself a favor and check this out. (JK)

Southern Records, PO BOX 577375 Chicago, IL 60657

KEPONE - SWEET IRENE, 7" This 7 inch reminds me a lot of the Minutemen. One predominate riff that gets pounded out, and then breaks into another for a chorus. Kepone also remind me of a sound similar to that of the Athens, GA scene of the early 80's. You know, when R.E.M. was good. 2 songs deserving a listen. (SY)

B Core Disc, PO Box 35221, 08080 Barcelona SPAIN

KIDS INC. - JOURNEY TO SEVEN, CD Journey to LAMEVILLE. (BC)

Kids inc. 818 Defense Drive, Marlton, NJ. 08053

KILL ME TOMORROW, 7" Oooh .. it's pretty. Dreamy-sounding indie pop with girl lead vocals and boy backups. It all falls together nicely and sounds pleasant. Mid-tempo and relaxing. Oh, and it's got the thickest cover I've ever seen for a seven-inch. (SM)

Kat Recordings, P.O. Box 460692, Escondido, CA 92046

KNOWLEDGE - A GIFT BEFORE I GO, CD

Proceeds from this record are going to the Nick Traina Foundation due to the singer of this bands untimely death due to manic depression. Reading the bio, I felt bad because death is never easy to deal with and Nick appeared to have an enormous affect on the people around him but I also knew by the description of Knowledge's music that I wasn't going to like them. The music is a cross between Vision Of Disorder style hardcore and Op Ivy style ska-punk. The combination comes of sounding a little too involved and ends up hurting the overall delivery but in any event, I hope that this record finds a home with someone because if you saw them, this CD may be better appreciated. (BR)

Asian Man, P.O. Box 35585, Monte Sereno, CA 95030

KUNG FU RICK / LUKE SKAWALKER - SPLIT, 7"

Kung Fu Rick could not have named their band better. Spastic and thrashy, they are more abusive to the ears then a bunch of karate kicks to the face. Don't get me wrong, it sounds great to my abused ears. I always thought Luke Skawalker was a ska band from Chicago. Go figure. They are power-violence from Chicago. Pretty straight forward but interlaced with some great rhythm changes. A great record with no ska, thanks heavens. (SY)

Ricky Schroeder Fan Club, 310 Neva Avenue, Glenview, IL, 60025

LIFELINE - S/T, CD With only 4 songs on this CD, I have to wonder what the point is, since this would fit on a 7". Heavy-duty hardcore with lots of references to unity make up the bulk of these songs. Still, the songs on this are excellent examples of the genre, without the horrible metallic guitar wanking that ruin a lot of hardcore. Decent, but four songs are too few. (MH)

Break Even Point via Vallebona, 28 00168 Rome Italy

L.M.P - LOCOMBIA, CD Kick ass punk rock from South America. These guys are doing the melodic punk rock thing, but it has a special something missing from so many others in the genre. Speedy tunes that at times make me think of the early punk stuff by Rancid. Recommended. (MH) L.M.P. A.A 26562 Cali, Colombia Suramerica

LOUNGE - PUNK ROCK SUPERHEROES, CD

Squeaky-clean pop punk. Speedy drum beats, clean stops and starts, melodic vocals and Ramones influences. We've all heard this stuff, and we keep right on hearing it as more bands learn the formula and run with it. These guys do it well, but do little to push the envelope. And the CD cover is really cheesy. (SM)

Triple Crown Records, 331 W. 57th St. #472, New York, NY 10019

LUNACHICKS - DROP DEAD LIVE, CD I wonder where the audience for this has gone. At one time I remember the Lunachicks being a big thing. They stick around and Go Kart decides to put out a live release and it wouldn't disappoint fans. Rock-n-roll belted out harder than any riot girl ever did. (EA)

Go Kart PO Box 20 Prince St. Station NY, NY 10012

MALEFACTION - DIVISIONS, 7" I swear I have seen this band play before and I think it was in Marshall, MI. They were crazy live and all that intensity is present on this record. The production is great with all the instruments at the right levels. Hardcore. Hardcore. Hardcore. The tempos are fast and faster with a great sync among the band. Great lyrics are an added bonus. (SY)

Bad Food For Thought Records, PO Box 26014, Sherbrook St. Winnipeg MB R3C 4K9

MANIACS - SO FAR SO LOUD, CD This one is worth the purchase for the classic 70's punk gem "Chelsea 1977" single. The extra 15 tracks come from a live compilation and demos. Chances are if you are into this you already got the single and want the extra tracks. Everything that Overground puts out has been essential, top-notch releases with a lot of cool bonus tracks. (EA)

Overground Records PO Box 1NW Newcastle Upon Tyne NE99 1NW England

MARILYN'S VITAMINS - POLITICS ON THE DANCE FLOOR, CD Ah, good old punk rock. It's nice when it's done without taking the cheezeball cliches to extremes. The band, while not avoiding cheeziness, belts out good old raw street punk with enthusiasm. The CD has cut and paste layout, the band members have punk rock last names, the songs have angry political lyrics, and it's all good fun. (SM)

Raw Energy, 65 Front St. W., Suite #0116-42, Toronto, Ont., Canada, M5J 1E6

MEADOWLARK - REVOLVER +5, 7" Supercharged emo-rock. This is powerful stuff. A jumble of instruments grabs a groove and hangs on while the vocalist screams in the foreground. Not everyone's cup of tea, but it is sweet noise to these bleeding ears. (MH)

High Water Records PO Box 1202 Denton TX 76202

MIDIRON BLAST SHAFT - S/T, 7" Remember that Rye Coalition split with Karp? This sounds just like Rye sounded on that. For those who don't remember, it's tense, mid-tempo hardcore, with songs angry enough to scare your mom but groovy enough to make you dance. It's really good. (SM)

450 Keswick Ave., Glenside, PA 19038

MIDWAY - TODAY'S THE DAY, CD Mark this band down under Generic Fat Wreck Type of Band. But this band does have something different than most others. It has an annoying snare drum sound that will eventually give you a headache by the end of the disc. So if you want a clear head stay away from this band. (BC)

Community Projects PO Box 10773 Columbus, OH 43201

THE MISFIRES - WHAT ELSE TO DO, 7" Well, what we have here is another great (like The Strike) band that takes us back into the Mod world. This band also has its roots in cold-ass Minneapolis. 4 songs to drive your cycle around town to. There seems to be a lot of bands with "the" in front of their names. This may be a good sign. Usually bands that have it in their names rock out. Maybe I will call myself "the" Brian Czarnik, because I rock out like the Misfires do!!! (BC)

Watch my Stance PO Box 13243 Minneapolis, MN 55414

MIXELPRICKS - BITTER?, CD The tap water must be spiked with pop punking agents or toxins in Lafayette, Indiana, because it seems like every band from there has the same pop tendencies. The Mixelpicks are no different. If you like other Sonic Iguana Studio productions, then you will no doubt be a fan of "bitter?" (MD)

Everybody Loves Records, PO Box 2570, Dunedin, FL 34697-2570

MK ULTRA/SEEIN' RED - SPLIT, LP The MK Ultra stuff is definitely the best they've put out yet. Super-pissed, charged, heavy, fast crunchy screamy hardcore. It's phenomenal how much anger and frustration explodes from this record. Screw the previous Punk Planet review of them saying something like they're a bunch of white middle class kids screaming about nothing - they're a group of some of the most sincere, generous, and unselfish people I know playing seriously intense, heartfelt music. Tight, brutal drumming, super distorted bass, fast guitars, and awesome maniacal vocals. Lyrics fall in a wide range of social/political issues with explanations for most of them for that fuzzy personal touch. When I first listened to the Seein' Red side I was disappointed. Either my record player was fucked up or I was on crack because it rules. Pounding, creative, pissed-off hardcore pretty much along the lines of their earlier releases. If you like political hardcore and haven't heard these guys yet you are sorely missing out. It's so inspiring to

see a group of people in their 30s still playing their hearts out and sticking to their ideals. Nifty samples from Tim Yo too. This record easily makes my top 5 of this year. (KB) Coalition PO Box 243 6500AE Nijmegen Holland

THE MOPES - LOWDOWN, TWO-BIT SIDEWINDER, CD Six songs stolen from the sixties garage scene and run through a modern day pop-punk machine consisting of members of Screeching Weasel, Queers and Squirtgun. You get music you will dance to and sing along as well. It has a goof factor that is a little above most of you pretentious punks, but a song like "Do the Hairball" hasta get you going. My only complaint is that six songs is a little short for a CD. (EA)

Lookout Records PO Box 11374 Berkeley, CA 94712

THE MUGSHOTS - PEOPLE WITHOUT NERVES, CD This is anarchy, as far as anarchy could go on a CD...these kids busted out their suspenders, laced up their boots and dirtied up their teeth, before departing for the studio. Oi Oi Oi. (FE)

Flat Broke Records 917 Abercorn St. Savannah, CA 31401

MY 3 SCUM - THE BEST & WORST OF MY 3 SCUM VOL. 1, CD A compilation CD of the first three My 3 Scum 7"s released in the early 90s, as well as an 1989 interview. This is relatively lo-fi, but is a excellent collection of this relatively unknown Erie, PA band. Some songs have a psychobilly flavor, but for the most part, this is straight ahead punk rock. Cool. (MH)

Erie Records 2408 Peach St. Erie, PA 16502

THE NEW RISING SONS - THE NEW RISING SONS, CD This band is like a rice cake, white and bland. College rock with annoying vocals and bland production. It's hard to review stuff like this because it's not really horrible, but I just don't like it very much. I'm sure somebody out there would get into this, but not me. (JK)

Grapeos Records, 332 Blecker St. No. K42, New York, NY 10014

NINE LIVES - RECOGNITION, CD Ex-Black Train Jack members combine their efforts into a new project called Nine Lives and this CD is the result. Much like BTJ, Nine Lives plays poppy punk with the exception of Nine Lives being a lot fluffier and poppier. There is not much else to say about this CD other than it did nothing for me. (BR)

Mendit, P.O. Box 1096, New York, NY 10003

NME - MUSIC FOR MAKING FRIENDS, CD Juvenile punk rock. Yelled vocals, one-two beats, and song titles like "I gotta take a dump," "I'm gay," "Itchy balls boy," Eat your butt for supper" and "I'm going to suck my dick or break my back trying." Need I say more? OK, how about I say "moron fest" and let it go at that? (SM)

Vision Trust Promotions, 3145 Geary Blvd. #262, San Francisco, CA 94118

THE NO-NO'S - SECRET LUMINARIES, CD A refreshing, girl-fronted pop band that reminds me a lot of the Fastbacks. They've got a well-known line-up: singer Heather Dunn played in Lois and Tiger Trap and bassist Ralf Youtz played in the Halo Benders. The press release thingy that

came with the CD describes Heater's voice as a "flirtatious growl," and I can't disagree. The group plays mid-tempo rocky stuff, they've got wimpy-sounding guitars, and the CD looks really nice. (SM)

Chromosome Records, Apt. B, 3559 SE Francis St., Portland, OR 97202

NUKES - PRODUCE NO FRUIT, CD Limp-sounding rock that suffers from a flat recording. Sounds kind of like Pegboy if they were really tired and uninspired. (SM)

PopSmear 6687 Sonoma Hwy., Santa Rosa, CA 95409

OSCAR AND THE PIDGIN SISTERS - THE BALD AND THE BEAUTIFUL, 7" It's the seventies and we are in New York and the Dictators rule the scene - flash forward Oscar and the Pidgin Sisters are playing and no one is probably listening. With this slab of vinyl you get something along the lines of the Dictators or the Devil Dogs, but more heavy rock feel. Lyrics that will disgust the average PC punk. (EA)

Vital Music PO Box 210 NY, NY 10276

PEACEFUL MEADOWS - NO JUSTICE, NO PEACE, CD Violent Hardcore. The name is sure to throw us off. This is angry and pissed-off HC Such not-so-easy listening classics as the cover of "Kill Your Boss" and the original "World of Shit." It just makes me kiss the punk planet gods and thank them that I get to review such beautiful music as this. (BC)

Allied PO Box 460683, San Francisco, CA 94146-0683

PENIS FLY TRAP - TALES OF TERROR, CD Oh god. Let me start by describing the cover. The band is sitting around a table having dinner. Their faces are painted white, their hair is dyed bright red. They've got fake blood dripping out of their mouths, which are covered in black lipstick. On the table is a dead girl, which the band is "eating." It's goth meets punk in the worst way. Now the music: pitifully simple punk with terrible vocals singing awful lyrics to songs with names like "Cemetery Girl" and "Tears of Blood." I hope these people are embarrassed. (SM)

Bloody Daggers Records, 7336 Santa Monica Blvd. #705, W. Hollywood, CA 90046

PETER THE GREAT/MR. CRISPY - SPLIT, 7" Mr. Crispy = Screeching Weasel. It's all there: the slightly-gravel vocals, the goofy songs about girls, the quick stops and melodious choruses. Formula pop punk, but not bad. Peter the Great: more pop punk, but not as melodious or goofy. Songs are more straight-forward. Again, not bad. Two songs each. Marble vinyl. (SM)

We're Not on a Label Records, P.O. Box 5816, Edmond, OK 73083-5816

PETERBUILT - REGULATION/CIRCUMFERENCE, 7" Two self-described emo ditties from this Floridian band. Fairly anthemic and crescendo-esque numbers that get the kids shakin' the shoulder action. I like the fluttery/strong sound of the drums on "Circumference" - it makes up for the lack of lyrics, heh. If you're into the big build-up punkrocksound, then come and get it folks. (PK)

\$3.50 ppd., Hazel, PO Box 195460, Winter Springs FL, 32719

PETTY CRIME - S/T, 7" Years after Skinned teen ruled my turntable we get Layla and her new band Petty Crime and me likes. Angry filled lyrics that you can actually read and understand that make this a must for youngins who missed the riot grrl movement and those of us who were there and want to remember how it was. This 8-track recording doesn't detract from the honest - in the basement feel that is inherent in this disc. (EA)

Slampt Underground PO Box 54 Heaton, Newcastle upon Tyne NE6 5YW, England

PHANTOM SURFERS AND DAVID ALLAN - SKATERHATER, CD Hah! a Rock/Surf Opera in three acts. Skaterhater has a punch and a sound that actually puts it on top for surf records out in the last few years. Any one who owns David Allan knows why this is that much better than the 1997 Phantom Surfers "Great Surf Crash of 97", which spun at my home for a long while. Highly suggested for those who want more contemporary surf? (EA)

Lookout Records PO Box 11374 Berkeley, CA 94712

PIG DESTROYER/ORCHID - SPLIT, 7" Are you feeling the hardcore? Pig Destroyer = Scott of Agoraphobic Nosebleed + members of Energy Soil. Orchid features ex Punk Planet record guy/columnist Will Dandy and friends. Hardcore isn't usually my thing, but this split definitely keeps the Rock in check. (MD)

Amendment Records c/o Dave A. 580 Nansemond Cres. Portsmouth, VA 23707

PLAN III - WOOD ALCOHOL IS NOT FOR DRINKING, 7" Ah, to be young and generic. For the most part this is generic thrash that has been done countless times by other bands. However, the song Wake Up America has the potential to be a punk anthem classic, but it will get lost amongst the other songs that don't show any such promise. Also includes a Minor Threat cover, and comes on lovely red vinyl. (MH)

Transparent Records 6759 Transparent Dr. Clarkston MI 48346

PLEXORJET - 7" Wow, this is actually pretty good. Three songs by this trio of the head-bobbing, choppy variety. Sharp, dueling guitar-playing and drumming that packs a punch. Technical in a good non-wank off way. Songs to shake yer rear or sap out to. A little like a sparser Harriet the Spy at times. I can hear a bit of a Lync influence too but that's probably just me. Very nice. (PK)

The Bedtime Record. PO Box 9142. Chattanooga TN, 37412

THE POTTYSHOTS - S/T, CD Surf rock. That's all. Nothing special, nothing exciting. Just a CD full of surf rock, recorded badly and lacking vocals. (SM)

Besuu Records, 1421 N. 69th St., Wauwatosa, WI 53218

THE PRICKS - MMM! THIS IS GOOD STUFF!, 7" Not since Guns and Roses has record artwork been so tasteful. The Pricks are just what you expect from these dicks. Fast and hard. They erect with in your face punk.

They insert their music into our main veins. These Swedes probably go limp after a while, but they remain stiff through these 6 tunes of erotic passion. Try the song "ass-wipe" or "dumbass motherfucker" for size and strap on the anger. (BC)

Hard-On Records c/o Janne Elfsten, Kjellingatan 10, 692 38 Kulma, Sweden C.d.s

PRIDE BOWL - YESTERDAY'S END, CD These guys are good at what they do, but there's something that I can't pinpoint...I think it might be the recording. The levels for all the instruments sound a little off, causing a headache for me, oh well if you like them than go with the flow. (FE)

Bad Taste Records (NO ADDRESS)

PSEUDOHEROES - DREAMING OF FREEDOM, 7" Pretty good lo-fi punk. definitely worth checking out, as this sounds better than most of the new "punk" releases I get to review. A bit generic, but it's all in good fun. Your three bucks will not be wasted. (MD)

Kyle Kline 227 Latonka Dr. Mercer, PA 16137

THE QUEERS - PUNK ROCK CONFIDENTIAL, CD I was going to review this without even listening to it, and I could have. The formula is so punched out and its been all a wash since the classic "Weebelos" era. Thousands of teenagers will eat this stuff up, but you can't fool me anymore. If you need more of this well-produced formula then run to the record store. (EA)

Hopeless Records PO Box 7495 Van Nuys, CA 91409

THE RADICALS/THRUST, SPLIT 7" Thrust = speedy, generic snotty punk rock. The Radicals = not as speedy, just as generic punk rock, but recorded very badly. This record = toilet food. (SM)

Small Town Records, 1604 S. Hwy 97 STE #192, Redmond, OR 97756

RADIOBAGHDAD - 665: NEIGHBOR OF THE BEAST, CD Punk rock with metal tinges for the chain-wearing, Dew guzzling, skateboarding, inner child in us all. (MD)

One Foot Records PO box 30666, long beach, ca 90853

RAMONES SONGBOOK #2, 7" Three Ramones songs done easy listening style. Blitzkrieg Bop, Teenage Lobotomy and Something to Believe In. What can be said, except that I would love to hear this the next time I am in an elevator. (EA)

Vital Music PO Box 210 NY, NY 10276

THE REPORTS - S/T, CDEP Remember all those old 80s bands that had synthesizers and fluffy hair and wore gloves and had like one good song before they disappeared off the face of the earth? The spirit of those bands is reborn in the Reports, who play a nineties version of the eighties. The songs are upbeat rockin' numbers, fit for radio play, that stick in your head and make you tap your toes. You'd never believe that an ex-member of Christie Front Drive plays on some of these songs.

Enjoyable. (SM)

The Bread Machine, P.O. Box 14624, Chicago, IL 60614

THE RESINATORS - S/T, CD This is only a 2 piece?!? A huge sound for a 2 piece. Screaming vocals. Straight up punk-rock. Very minimalist. Very Lo-Fi, very low recording quality, kinda weak packaging. But it is intriguing. Strangely reminds me of Black Flag on occasions. Am I in love with it? No. But its something.

Past It Records, 2235 Market St., San Francisco, CA 94114

ROUNDHOUSE - LASHING OUT, 7" Chunky guitar hardcore with really gruff vocals. While the music is almost too testosterone laden, the lyrics seem pretty well thought out and intelligent. Mostly mid-tempo, with occasional bursts of speed. Better than a lot of what is out there. (MH)

Free Spirit Records PO Box 1252 Madison Sq. Sta. New York NY 10159

THE SABOTEURS - ESPIONAGE GARAGE, CD Hmm... I'll give you three guesses what this sounds like. If you guessed instrumental spy rock, you guessed right! I like it. This is a musical style that can walk a very fine line between fun and cheesy. This one keeps both feet comfortably on the fun side. It's hard to listen to guitar instrumentals without the Man or Astroman? comparison, but I think it is deserved on a few of these tracks. (harlo)

American Pop Project, PO Box 227, San Rafael, CA 94912

SAIBON - IN YOUR FACE, EP Snotty punk rock, with simple three-chord songs and great lyrics: "A doesn't of my friends will come to your house tomorrow, beat you with a hockey stick and I won't feel sorry." They're from Sweden, so excuse the spelling of "dozen." This is recorded badly to boot. (SM)

Hard-On Records, c/o Elfsten, Kjellingatan 10, 692 38 Kumla, Sweden

THE SARCASTIC BITCH/JADED FROM THE NINTH GRADE, SPLIT - CD First off, I'm not a fan of the split-CD format, unless the two bands sound EXACTLY the same. These two don't... well, not really. I don't know what riot girl stuff is supposed to sound like, but I'm guessing that its what these bands are trying for. The Makeshift Conspiracy sound tolerable when someone is singing, and much worse when someone is screaming. I find The Sarcastic Bitch much more lyrically fun and interesting. I'm not sure which is worse; scary screaming or baby girl tantrum screaming. Now I know the real problem with Split-CD's: you HAVE to compare the two bands. (harlo)

Spazm Records, address?

SATANS PILGRIMS - CREATURE FEATURE, CD Creepy surf stuff from Satans Pilgrims that will not disappoint. Seeing this band live made me appreciate what is going on here on this disc. How can one make surf sound fresh and interesting after all the years it has been around. Some how the Pilgrims do it, and repeatedly. This one should scare you right through the next year. (EA)

Estrus PO Box 2125 Bellingham, WA 98227

SERVO - BLUEPRINT, EP Sweet-sounding, catchy pop punk with not just girl vocals, but also girl backups. There are even some "woah-oh-oh's thrown in here and there. Five songs on a seven inch, all of which are toe-tapping, head-bobbing numbers. Good job. (SM)

Crackle! Records, P.O. Box HP49, Leeds, LS6 4XL, United Kingdom

SKAM-IMPAIRED - THE MORGAN, 7" Another band with ska in their name, sounding exactly how you would expect a fast poppy 3rd wave ska with annoying nasal vocals to sound. These guys will probably be on MTV before the end of the month.

Better Days Records 1591 Bardstown Rd. Louisville KY 40205

SKIMMER - VEXED, CD Well here is another British band off of the roster from Crackle Records. They are the best thing going for that record company so far. Their brand of popish' punk has a Midwestern feel to it. This is well worth a listen. So for once, get off your lazy ass, buy some funny looking stamps, and order some music and stop going to those evil chain stores and buying major label releases. You can always tape the Hole song off the radio you know! (BC)

Crackle! PO Box HP 49 Leeds, LS6 4XL, UK.

SLAIN/STATE OF FILTH - SPLIT, 7" Some of the most brutal evil-sounding female vocals can be found on the Slain side of this record. Sometimes bordering on grind usually just sounding like fast 90s hardcore with some crusty and even metal parts the music is pretty good (especially the crazy drumming). But the vocals are definitely the best part, particularly in the song Touchy/Feely with an interesting mix of singing (more like chanting) and growling/screaming. State of Filth play more straightforward crust with a familiar 4/4 formula and strained grizzly bear vocals. Not exactly my thing but they do it well and the production is pretty good. (KB)

Enslaved PO Box 169 Forster Ct. Bradford BD1 2UJ England or Smack in the Mouth PO Box 1TA Newcastle-upon-Tyne NE99 1TA England

THE SMUGGLERS - GROWING UP A SMUGGLER, CD Wow! It has been ten years since this band first kick around garage classics. I didn't even realize that I bought Marineland almost eight years ago. Do these jerks honestly think that they should put out a live 10th anniversary album? Ha, why not? Few bands can say they entertain they way the Smugglers do (even less from Canada). I love this band, their stupid intelligence and pop sensibility should get you hunting down some of the elusive records in their discography. This is a fine place to start for newcomers and a must have for true fans. Though a vinyl version with extra tracks is available on 1+2 records. (EA)

Lookout Records PO Box 11374 Berkeley, CA 94712

SORE LOSER - IS OUT TO SAVE THE WORLD, CD Sore Loser plays pop punk. Some of their songs are slower, some of them are faster. If you like the pop punk that is coming out these days, then you will like Sore Loser. (MD)

Act Your Age Records 3244 Locke Ln., Houston, TX 77019-6208

STERLING SILVER, 7" This is amazing. Let's start with the packaging. It's set up like a book, with a beautiful silver cover, a chapter for each song, the record label is called the publisher and the musicians are called the authors. The record itself is in a packet attached to the back cover. The music is powerful without ever using distortion on the guitars or screaming for vocals. It's the best mix of indie rock and hardcore. Vocal duties are shared between male and female, guitar sounds alternate between acoustic and electric. I'm just in love with this record. (SM)

Slowdance Records, P.O. Box 120548, San Diego, CA 92112

STRICKEN FOR CATHERINE - LETTERS NOT SENT, CD I hate bio sheets. They never seem to describe what I hear. Who knows, maybe my hearing is bad. Stricken For Catherine plays a healthy brand of heavy rock with hints of hardcore, blurring the lines between Quicksand and Air Supply. The vocals are well harmonized with the music and there are interesting things going on throughout. I honestly think that this CD is decent enough to sit through again. A tad too mature sounding for an everyday listen though. I feel old. (BR)

Espo Records, P.O. Box 63, Allston, MA 02134

SUFFER/URKO - SPLIT, 7" The Suffer side contains the last tracks to be released by them. It's unfortunate that the production is super raw (a bit too raw) because the songs are great - brutal, pissed no frills fast hardcore that punches you around the head with some brooding pensive moments (like the amazing song Listen 2). There's a pretty hilarious brief account of their US tour included entitled "Get in the Fucking Van" by "Snenry Rollins". Urko brings us some misanthropic somewhat crusty hardcore. The first song is so powerful with a great chorus: "Extinction x3 Ape control" and the last song is a pretty funny take on a Youth of Today song they call "I Have (No) Faith". Overall, a good record that deserves more attention than it will probably get. (KB)

Flat Earth PO Box 169 Bradford BD7 1YS England or Enslaved PO Box 169 Forster Ct. Bradford BD1 2UJ England

SUNDAY PUNCHER - FOR YOUR EVER-CHANGING WORLD, CD Fuzzy, no nonsense indie rock, with an emphasis on the "rock." Catchy, but not generic, "for your ever-changing world" is probably one of the best indie rock releases I have heard in a while. A good addition to any indie or rock collection. (MD)

Turnbuckle, 163 3rd Ave #435, NY, NY 10003

SUPERHIGHWAY CARFIRE - DEFECTIVE IMMEDIATELY, CD Something about distorted lyrics bothers me. Sort of reminds me of Ministry vocals or something. I don't know what it is exactly about it that bothers me, but it just doesn't work for me. Other than that, not a lot to comment about here. Kind of some neat guitar-work going on, but I just can't get into it. (harlo)

Infernal Racket PO Box 4641, Bethlehem, PA 18018

THAN - HONEY BAKED GODDESS, CD This band is quite the maneuver, there's one song that sounds like mellow ska, another that sounds like mid-tempo Irish folk, and another that sounds plain alternative. This group is from Babylon, and maybe that has something to do with it. (FE)

Nana Moo records PO Box 1222, West Babylon, NY 11704

THIS ROBOT KILLS - MOLECULE, 7" This Robot Kills sounds like the Fall and it is the most exciting thing in the world. Total jerky rhythms played with an overflow of energy. The melodic and keyboard interludes sound great. Ron's vocals are obnoxious and fit the formula perfect. The whole band is a bunch of whackos. The low-fidelity of This Robot Kills' last release got them labeled as a garage band, yet only the dipshits call this music garage. (SY)

Outer Universe Research, 1257 Ameluxen, Hacienda Heights, CA 91745

THREE STEPS UP - S/T, CD 7-songs of high quality indie rock along the lines of Superchunk. These New Yorkers will probably be the next big indie thing, but with their quality songwriting, it will be well deserved. (MH)

Break Even Point via Vallebona, 28 00168 Rome Italy

THUNDERCRACK - OWN SHIT HOME, CD Holy G-Zuz mother Christopher. It is about time that an album makes me want to shake, rattle and roll. Thank you Estrus for a fine combination of trash, raunch, Pussy Galore and 60's garage. This blows away the single I already owned and sold my soul to Thundercrack. Gotta dig the harmonica and organ that peeks in and adds the flavor to this 12 song winner. (EA)

Estrus PO Box 2125 Bellingham, WA 98227

TORN APART - THE FIFTY-NINTH SESSION, CD Hmm... did I miss the meeting when it was decided that everyone was going to start calling heavy metal punk. Hey, don't get me wrong, I like some metal, but lines are getting really blurred here. Maybe that's not bad, I don't know. Anyway, Torn Apart play 6 songs on this CD that are that half-metal, half-hardcore thing that the kids are into these days. Kind of some neat stuff happening here musically. I like the breakdowns and bridges. It's not bad, just not my bag. (harlo)

Ferret Records, PO Box 4118, Highland Park, NJ 08904

TRANSITIONAL - S/T, CD This band creates a nice space odyssey type of rock and roll. You might be able to dance to this stuff even! The female vocals are cool and they reminded me of a cross between Terri Nun from Berlin and this girl I use to go out with before she turned into a crack whore and got all crazy. At Christmas she whipped a bottle at my head and... forgot it. So this band is interesting and this is a good release of four very different songs. Maybe they will be big stars in the club scene some day. (BC)

Pehr PO BOX 750996 Petaluma, CA 94975

TREPAN NATION - BANISH GODS FROM SKIES AND CAPITALISTS FROM EARTH, LP The music is totally not my thing at all - fast melodic hardcore a la Fat Wreck Chords with semi-melodic gruff off-key vocals. It is super tight and well-played though and I'm sure that after a few listens it will start to grow on me like Propagandhi did.

Why would I want to listen to this more and hope the music grows on me? The same reason I had for Propagandhi - the lyrics are amazing. You can read them as prose or little essays or even letters and they cover social and personal issues in a way that somehow shoots straight to your heart. Well done and nicely packaged. (KB)

Harmless Records 1437 W. Hood Chicago, IL 60660

TRISTEZA, 7" Slow, moody instrumental indie rock. Once the songs pick up, they really start to rock. Definitely worth a listen if you are into the indie thing. (MD)

Tristeza, PO box 620173 San Diego, CA 92163

UNDERDOG - THE VANISHING POINT, CD

Originally released in 1989 on Caroline Records, this blast from the past features better than average hardcore mixed with the occasional reggae tune. This CD contains the 12 studio tracks from the original album along with another 12 of live and demo stuff. If you aren't familiar with Underdog, think of mid-period Bad Brains. A nice re-issue. (MH)

Go Kart PO Box 20 NYC 10012

THE VEHICLE BIRTH - TRAGEDY, CD

The witty bio that comes with this CD hails The Vehicle Birth's music as "a Modest Mouse-ish pop in a DC Punk-esque atmosphere with really cool friends from That Touch & Go type of punk indie-math-hip vibe". Well sugarshit, how can the PK top that sassy description?! Save for perhaps inserting the term "boy rock" somewhere into the equation. Ooh ahh, should we take that up on that Politically Incorrect show or whatthefuckever. Tense stuff dudes. (PK)

Crank!, 1223 Wilshire Blvd., #823, Santa Monica CA, 90403

VIDI VITTIES, 7" A weird guitar-rock foursome, playing a mix between surf rock and Spanish guitar songs. Most songs have no vocals. Actually, most songs just suck. Blah. (SM)

Peek-A-Boo P.O. Box 49542. Austin, TX 78765

THE WAYOUTS - BETTER DAYS..., CD

I haven't heard much poppy stuff that has excited me recently, but I'm glad this little exception fell into my lap. When you listen to a band that excites you in the way this band excited me, you know they did something right, and these guys did something right in every definition of the word. This record is fueled with a smile and excitement, causing the best of pop punkability. This is the most impressive CD for this session of reviews. Keep up the good work. Pop Punk as fuck (FE)

Harmless Records 1437 W. Hood Chicago IL 60660

THE WOGGLES - WAILING WITH THE WOGGLES, CD

The Woggles play some mighty fine Lo-Fi Rock and Roll as those of you familiar with their releases on Estrus can attest to. Looks like this one is available on 10 inch also. Their music reminds me of the UK rock and roll bands of the post-British invasion era, very fun and rocking, but some grooves here too. Good Stuff. (harlo)

One Louder Records. PO Box 1NW. Newcastle Upon Tyne. NE 99 1NW

YOU AND I - WITHIN THE FRAME, CD

I can picture this band falling all over themselves onstage as they tear out their souls performing these intense, personal hardcore songs. Is that a good way to describe them without saying that word "emo"? Anyway, You and I play hard, angry music with lots of variety to keep it interesting—they transition to soft parts, to melodic singing, to stops and starts. This is really good. The packaging is great, too—each band member gets his own insert in the CD. Well done. (SM)

Spiritfall, 215 Hancock Ave., Bridgewater, NJ 08807

YOUR MOM - SOMETHING FOR NOTHING, CD

I wrote my review of this CD then picked up the last issue of Punk Planet and noticed it had already been reviewed. It got a really bad review, so perhaps the label sent the CD again, hoping a different reviewer would like it. No such luck. Here's my review: Combining the worst elements of Nirvana and Soundgarden, Your Mom come together to make a sludgy, grungy mess better left in the garage. The singer growls and contorts his voice in way that can only be described as cheesy, and the guitarist frequently wanks all over the place with a wa wa pedal or something. Besides, the cover art, with a little girl selling "Armageddon" for 5 cents at a lemonade stand, is just silly. Now stop sending us this stupid CD. (p.s.—This band is not to be confused with "Your Mother.") (SM)

Do Ray Me. P.O. Box 461617. Los Angeles. CA 90046

V/A - FUCK YOU PUNX, VOL. 1 Four bands on blue marble vinyl. Eight Bucks experiment: sludgy redneck rock. Familymen: speedy garage rock. Super Buick: redneck rock, sans sludge. Giant Killer: snotty punk rock with poppiness. Nothing bad, but certainly not good. (SM)

Blue Moon Recordings. 2075 University Blvd., #264. Denver, CO 80210

V/A - LIBERAME, 7" Featuring bands such as Los Crudos, Godstomper, Youth Against, Kontraataque, Swipe, Huasipungo, Parades End, and Former members of Alfonsin, this punk/hardcore/crust 7" includes extensive liner notes regarding Human Rights, etc. As with any compilation, quality varies, but if you like any of these bands, you will probably like this 7". (MD)

Elgrite. PO box 20722. LA, CA 90006

V/A - THE NEW FRONTIER, CD This is a collection of Colorado punk bands, most of whom are pretty generic, some of whom are not so bad. Features 30 bands including, but not limited to, All, the Nobody's, Los Terribles, Pinhead Circus, the LaDonnas, the Fairlaines, et cetera... (MD)

Soda Jerk PO box 4056. Boulder, CO 80306

V/A - SHIT LIKE A CHAMPION—THE SOUTH BEND AREA DIY COMP, CD With slight variations, every band on this compilation plays old-school punk rock.

Bad recordings, shitty musicianship and general juvenility pervades. The bands: American youth, Angry Noise, The Antics, Blue Owl Circus, The Bruce Campbell Band, Cervates, Corporate Circus, The Dead Beats, Durge, Elephant, Hooligan Riot, The Jerkoffs, The Ninjas, Restricted Vision, Societal Blasphemy, Crash Annoyance, My 3 Thumbs, Yucko. (SM)

Plinko 1001 E. Wayne St., South Bend, IN 46617

V/A - SKA SUCKS, CD Ska Sucks, eh? Methinks not. 30 tracks which look to all have been released in one form or another in the past. Plenty of stuff on this compilation of varying quality and styles. I actually like this comp quite a bit. It completely runs the gamut from traditional-style ska (hepcat, ocean 11) to ska-punk (or is it punk-ska this week?) from the likes of slapstick, Against All Authority and others, yet doesn't focus on any style long enough to alienate anyone. The sheer volume of music is what makes it good. This is one of the first ska compilations which gives a fairly complete overview of the genre. Chances are that if you like ska at all, you'll like this comp; I do. (harlo)

Liberation records. PO Box 17446 Anaheim, CA 92817

V/A - YOUNG TIL I DIE, A TRIBUTE TO 7 SECONDS, 7" This would be such an easy to fuck up, but bands on this record pull it off with perfection. The bands representing are xINVICTUSx, Sideswipe, In Spite Of, Empire Falls, Smackdown, & Reinforce. The youthful energy that drove the original classics are present here in these bands.

Without that energy, it doesn't surprise me when so many other tribute comps fail. This one is great. (SY)

Groovecore. PO Box 7478 Winston-Salem, NC 27109

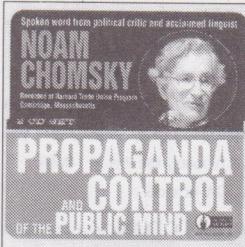
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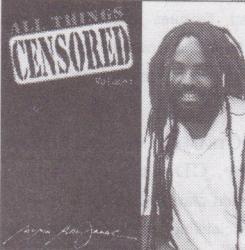
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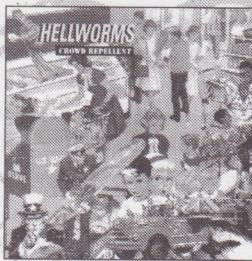


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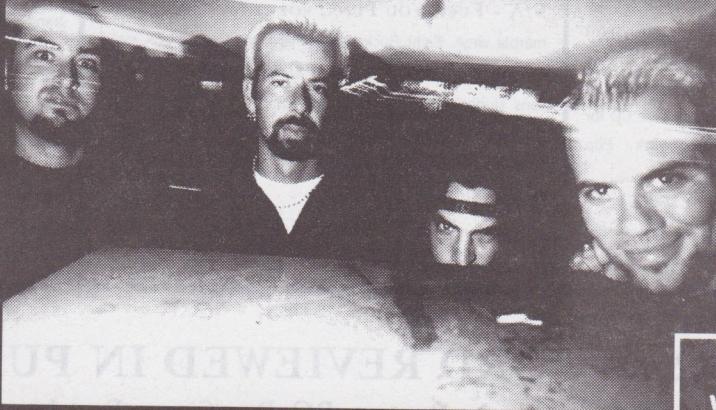
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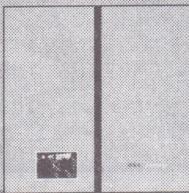
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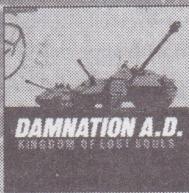
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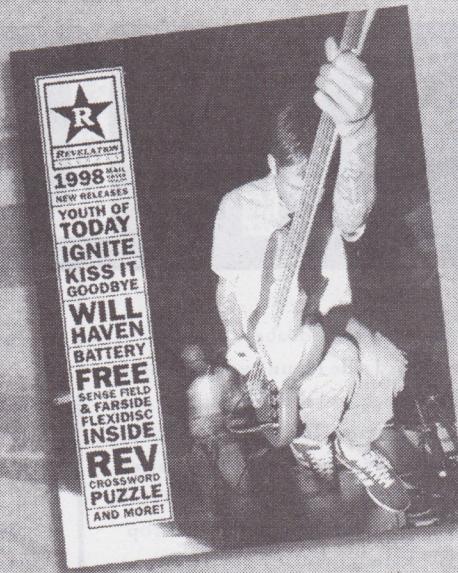
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PLASTIC FILM

Mr. Lady is a record label and video label. The record side is run by Kaia Wilson from Team Dresch and the video side is run by filmmaker/zinester Tammy Rae Carland, best known for the zine *I Heart Amy Carter*. In their press packet, Tammy Rae had a really good discussion about how punks will drop \$16 on a CD but would never buy a punk rock video. Let's face it: There's just more of an economy built up around music and punk rock record labels. Despite these problems, so many film/videomakers are still trying to forge some kind of outlet for their punk-inspired films.

Call me an optimist, but I really think that in the near future punk will be a viable alternative to Hollywood/Indiewood/Academic/Museum circuit. As more people get access to cheaper cameras and editing systems there will be more homemade films/videos to review. This way, people can have some information on what's out there, creating a demand which will lead to better distribution. I've met so many punks who, as they get older, have video collections just as big as their record collections. Tammy was expressing this same vision to me. She has a bunch of titles but only sent me a few for review. A lot of her stuff has a queer bent, but funny enough. The only 'straight girl' movie she sent me, *SWALLOW*, was the weakest one. This is what I dug:

LADY (OUT)LAWS AND FAGGOT WANNABES by Tammy Rae Carland—I had heard about this video forever from *Femme Flicke* zine but never had a chance to check it out. It rocks. *LADY OUTLAWS* tackles the obvious and not-so-obvious clichés about dykes and throws them back in your face. Some of her images are hauntingly beautiful. I like how she spoofs the acad-

mia/psychological take on lesbians. Tammy has a sharp cinematic sense where she can truly convey feelings and ideas through images and voiceover, but it resonates with meaning. She also brings up some powerful issues like Aileen Warnos, the folk hero serial killer, who got seriously shafted during her trial. Did you know that 17 out of the 41 women on death row are lesbians? The soundtrack includes Kaia Wilson and Team Dresch. I highly recommend this film to anyone as it is a powerful expression of how one girl feels about her life instead of a generic 'issues' film. MRLV 02, 21 minutes, \$20. 18 and over, include age statement.

MAYBE NEVER (BUT I'M COUNTING THE DAYS) by Nygen Ton Hoang—What is it with Mr. Lady and titles in parenthesis? Anyway, at first this video really bugged me. Too-dark footage of a cityscape at night with graphic sex talk from all different people all starting with "I'll never..." Like "I'll never feel your hot cum running down my leg." It came off as really pretentious 'I'm-suffering.' But then the visuals changed to a super-colored, hyper-candy montage and the voiceovers were less heavy handed and more fun. Fun like the bubblegum montage set to an *En Vogue* song. All sorts of people posing in lots of different ways. It was like a Benetton ad but I really liked it because everyone looked so... normal, for lack of a better word. The colors were fantastic and it was shot really well. The aesthetic was really, really fresh. The end titles with everyone reading the graphic sex lines were hysterical. I wish that was part of the 'actual film.' It was fun to see 'Yumi', who sounds like an old Asian grandma but has superstar potential. This tape also includes:

FOREVER LINDA by Nygen Ton Hoang—This one was hysterical, dealing with a gay guy's obsession with supermodels and how it helps him accept who he is. In the beginning, a confused boy is making lists of who he'll come out to. He practices on stuffed animals with Asian teenybopper posters looking down on him. The cinematography is playful and the soundtrack has this really great, weird French music (it says in the catalog 'Vietnamese Superstar/Singer Thanh Lan'). Hoang uses this great technique where people wear 'masks' of a supermodel's face. I don't know if it's because we are so used to looking at models one-dimensionally, but after a while it seems like these floating faces are real. There's a great art opening scene where everyone is wearing a model mask. It's so surreal—and a great way to get name casting for no money. My favorite part is when the guy's on this imaginary TV show with Yumi (see above review). Her broken English and charming manners add another level, she's an angel in a TV world. More Yumi! There's a happy ending which is framed by lights, like a star's dressing room mirror. Very glamorous. This guy has got style.

MRLV 06, 27 minutes \$20. 18 and over, include age statement.

Mr. Lady also sells Nygen Ton Hoang's later work **FOREVER JIMMY & 7 STEPS TO STICKY HEAVEN** which I've heard from my pal Chi-Hui is pretty good. MRLV 05, 30 min, \$20. 18 and over, include age statement.

THE JUDY SPOTS by Sadie Benning. To me, Sadie Benning is a hero. She's pretty well known in the art world for doing some amazingly evocative video work with

the Fisher Price PXL Vision toy camera (no longer available, it records grainy black and white video onto audio cassettes). I remember seeing her work in college in '90 and being so impressed by her openness and vulnerability while being so tough and cool. Her stuff is confessional but powerful. I subconsciously copied her style forever with my own PXL vision tapes but had forgotten that I was ripping her off until I booked a short of hers in a program of cool girl shorts. Oops. She is a self-labeled Riot Girl filmmaker and before now her stuff was really hard to find or really expensive since her old distributor, Video Data Bank, mostly sold to other colleges and museums who will pay jacked up prices for videos. But back to The Judy Spots. These were made as part of MTV's Ain't Nothing But a She Thing series to go in between segments. They're not on PXL but they are still black and white. And this time instead of filming herself she uses 'Judy,' a morose looking puppet who deals with dumb jobs, mall culture, gossipy friends and a slew of other 'life experiences' broken up into 'spots' like Judy Gets a Job. Judy is Sad. With elaborate-but-simple sets, honest straightforward narrative, voice-over by both Sadie and Kathleen Hanna, as well as music by KH and Azalia Snail, Sadie turns girlhood into a densely layered, dreamy, funny, painful, visceral experience. MRLV 09, \$20.

For more info contact Mr. Lady P.O. Box 3189, Durham, NC 27715-3189 or mrlady@mindspring.com

QUICK TAKES:

On the sillier side of things, we have METALLICA DRUMMER. In the vein of such classics as HEAVY METAL PARKING LOT, this is a VHS of some guy, probably in high school, who sets up a chair in his parents' living room opposite a video camera. Metallica starts up, blaring loudly. Suddenly, our mild mannered high school boy turns into drumming machine as he perfectly air drums to Metallica's Black Album: Sad But True, Wherever I May Roam and Through the Never. This is one

of the funniest things I've seen in a long time. The guy is so serious and intense, you're right there with him. How did this get around? Well, Cup (aka Robin) from Cub and I am Spoonbender fame were living in Vancouver with singer Nico Case who got it from someone who stole the tape from the backseat of a car. Cup sent it to Dustin, former drummer of Pansy Division and now of I am Spoonbender fame, who showed the tape to friends for the next year before deciding to release it on video, selling 50 copies in less than 30 days. Dustin says that as a fellow drummer, he was totally impressed with the guy's talent—obviously a real drummer as he has both feet going on the pedals, hitting the different drums and cymbals. Dustin feels MD's passion is infectious, which is why it makes such a great video. In the meantime, Dustin has gone totally crazy with METALLICA DRUMMER fever as he is devoting a Website to the guy, with a contest to guess his real name. Dustin is also trying to track down the drummer for an interview. In fact, by the time this comes out, it might be up. Check www.iamspoonbender.com for info. To order, send \$10 (no checks) to 3288 21st #201, San Francisco, CA 94110.

While we're on the mail order video tip, I got a tape of a documentary called ZINED by Marc Moscato. While not the best made film in the world, it's obvious that the filmmaker has a lot of passion for the subject and its a good primer for learning about zines. There's a funny part where he asked a wide variety of clueless people what a zine is and Mykel Board makes an appearance as the only well known zinester in the film. This film features a lot of masks, from ski to Mexican, I'm not sure of the connection to zinesters and hidden identity (well, actually...). One complaint: Next time make the titles of the zines big enough to see, especially in a documentary about zines. Send \$8 (\$10 if out of the U.S.) to 1094 Elmwood Ave #1 Buffalo, NY 14222.

A while back I wrote about uber-punk distributor Jack Stevenson. He wrote a great article called 'The Sleaziest Theater in

America.' Of course he was talking about San Francisco's 24 HOUR MINI ADULT THEATER on Turk and Jones. Well, I finally found a guy who would take me there and Jack is not exaggerating one bit. You have to go through a subway-style turnstile to get into a mid-size square room that looks like the VFW except it's dark and there's no frills black theater seats facing a torn screen—I'm talking a huge chunk missing from the side. They continuously run double feature porn on film without stopping or bringing the lights up at all. But the best part for me was that there's a well-lit hallway to the right of the screen. I suppose there's bathrooms back there but it serves as some crack dealer's office so the whole time everyone is running back and forth to the hallway and you can see them buying crack as easily as you can see the movie. In fact, you can look back and forth between the two, especially since the porn is more of historical value than erotic. We were there at three a.m. on a Tuesday and it was packed. I don't recommend going alone unless you're one of those people who can be invisible, especially if you're a woman. I heard that Super 8 punk film goddess Martha Colburn checked out the 24 MINI ADULT while on her cross country film tour and she was so impressed she made t-shirts of the theater. \$5 admission, open 24 hours cleaning from 5 am to 7:30 am.

Slumber Party Tip—Try the lost '80s classic NIGHT OF THE COMET. It's kind of like a zombie movies for girls where a comet comes around and kills everyone on earth except for two sisters and a couple of stray people and mutants. After the girls freak out they decide to hit the mall since everything is free. This film is pretty stupid, especially the end, but one of the sisters is enough of a badass that there's a definite 'guilty pleasure' aspect.

Send feedback to SWPchick@aol.com or P.O. Box 471807, San Francisco, CA 94147. I also do a film called MARY JANE'S NOT A VIRGIN ANYMORE which is currently on tour. Check it out if it comes to your town, or visit the Website at: www.sirius.com/~lenny/maryj2.html

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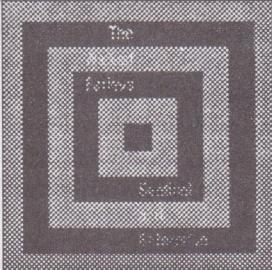
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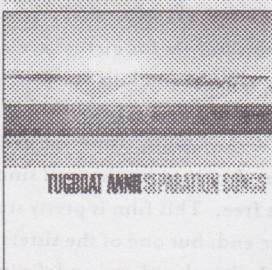
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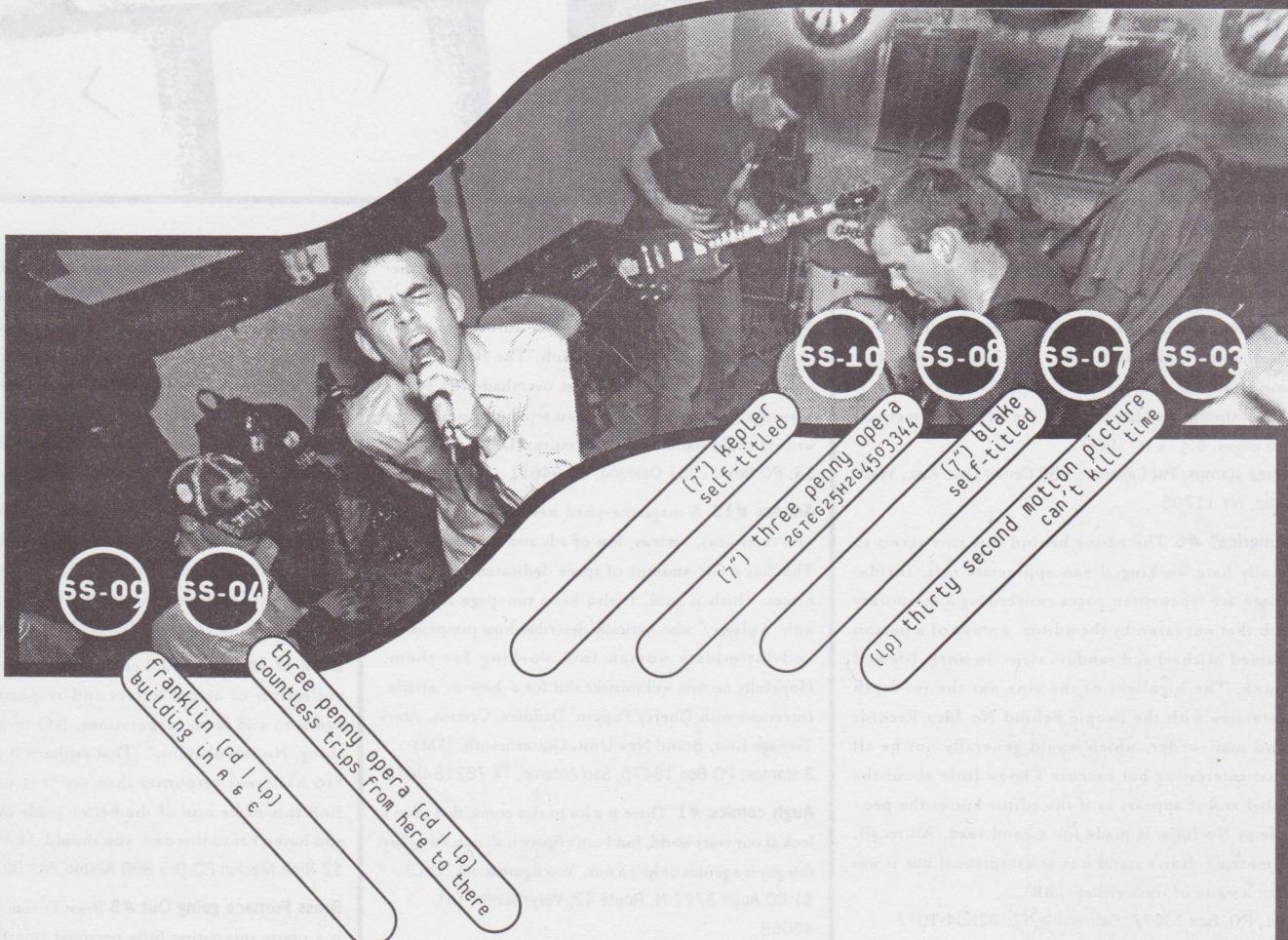
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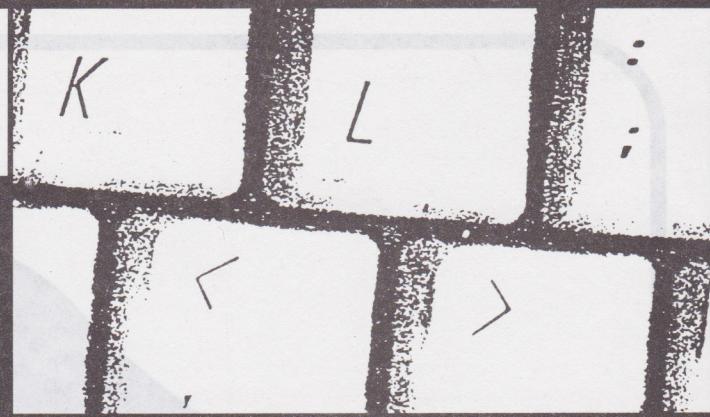
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PAPER ZINES



Alliance Fanzine #2 Interviews with Trial, Avail and Artie Phillie (Milhouse), along with record and zine reviews, compose the sum total of this by-the-numbers newsprint hardcore zine. The computerized layout could stand to gain some personality (in fact it is fairly simple and bland), and the ads are numerous. 32 pages, 8.5" x 11" (JVS)

three stamps; Pat Callahan, 580 Center Dyre Ave., West Islip, NY 11795

America? #6 The editor behind this zine seems to really hate working. I can appreciate this. Inside, there are typewritten pages concerning a temporary job that was taken by the editor, a story of a person named Michael and random views on work, life and punk. The highlight of the zine was the in-depth interview with the people behind No Idea Records and mail-order, which would generally not be all that interesting but because I know little about the label and it appears as if the editor knows the people at No Idea, it made for a good read. All in all, America? didn't stand out as exceptional but it was not a waste of time either. (BR)

\$1, P.O. Box 13077, Gainesville, FL 32604-1077

Angry Thoreauan #22 Another fine issue of human interest mails out to the uneducated masses. Learns about toilet stalls, the Pope, Hitler and phone sex lines that specialize in "mommy" calls. Angry Thoreauan has been specializing in the weird and delightful sins of America since 1987 and if you have never picked up an issue, now is a fine time to start. I guarantee you will learn something you didn't know and laugh hard at least once out loud. (EA)

PO Box 3478 Hollywood, CA 90078

Animal Trap #3 An art zine in the very best sense of the world. I was lucky enough to get Animal Trap #2 for review a few issues back and feel truly honored to get it again. Simply put, Animal Trap is breathtaking. The frail line drawings of skeletal humans floating on a vast field of high quality paper, with a few fragile words floating around them just blow me away. There is so much texture, so much depth to these fleeting pictures. Looking at these pictures one after the other is overwhelming. I found myself having to look at a few pages

and then move onto another zine, returning back after a few minutes to digest a few more of the drawings. Also included in Animal Trap are autobiographical stories of the author/artist's youth. The stories, while moving in their own right, get overshadowed by the drawings. I wish that this was two separate zines, so the writing could stand on its own more. (DS)

\$3, PO Box 11351 Oakland, CA 94611

Annex #13 A magazine-sized newsprint music zine, with interviews, reviews, lots of ads and the whole deal. This has a fair amount of space dedicated to opinion pieces, which is cool. It also has a two-page interview with "a player," who basically describes how pimps abuse and intimidate woman into working for them. Hopefully no one will mistake this for a 'how-to' article. Interviews with Cherry Poppin' Daddies, Cretins, Atari Teenage Riot, Brand New Unit, Guttermouth. (SM)

3 stamps; PO Box 18475, San Antonio, TX 78218-0475

Augh comics #1 There is a lot to this comic that takes a look at our crazy world, but I can't figure it all out. So either this guy is a genius or he's a nut. You figure it out. (BC)

\$1.00 Augh 3727 N. Route 42, Waynesville, OH 45068

Auscar Morbid #6 Well, this is the new and improved issue of A.M. I haven't seen the old one yet so I couldn't tell you if it has improved or not, but lets take Tara's (the author) word for it. She tells the tale of the Warped tour (why did you go!) and how she got backstage and hung out with the rock stars and got all drunk. Besides that filler, there are some cool comics about cops and getting all fucked up and shit. Yeah, I remember when I had my first beer and thought that getting backstage was cool. (BC)

A Stamp Tara 1621 N. Washtenaw Ave. Chicago, IL 60647

Autopilot # 2 and #3 Right off the bat, Autopilot grabbed me by the throat and leered me in without warning. The graphics are so well done; unpretentious and very original, that it was easy on the eyes and made me want to read every word and so I did. Issue #2 deals with the discrimination of Asian-Americans and besides the writing that goes in depth, each page is coupled with thought provoking questions and answers concerning

the subject which are eye opening, to say the least. Issue #3 deals with graffiti and has an interview with Richmond based painter and creator of Attica. The story about the author and his two companions on their burglary adventures are so excellent and detailed that it made me want to hold up a bank. Autopilot is easily one of the best zines I have read in a long time. (BR)

\$1, 11021 Woodland Pond Pkwy, Chesterfield, VA 23838

Black Cat 13! #3 This here Wisconsin occult and horror movie zine scares the B-Jesus out of me. Loads of evil movie, book, and comic reviews. And a nice article on the history of Halloween. Don't read this alone! (BC)

\$2.00 BC 5045 Piccadilly Drive, Madison, WI 53714

Book of Letters #10 Let's use his description, "A collection of actual letters and responses, mostly funny to and from corporations. NO reviews of anything. No submissions." That explains it and though #10 has fewer responses than say #1-5 or so, I still find this to be one of the better reads out there. If you haven't read this one, you should. (EA)

\$2 Rich Mackin PO Box 890 Allston, MA 02134

Brass Furnace going Out #5 Brass Furnace going Out is a pretty interesting little personal zine filled mostly with little short journal type stories and a few political stories. The writing is pretty good, but the personal stories are all pretty short and don't really go anywhere. I liked the political stuff though, and the story about bowling offers a brief but entertaining slice of American Suburban life. I never really get into most personal zines so I'm probably not the best guy to review this. It's not that I didn't like it, but its just not my thing. (JK)

Brass Furnace Going Out, Jane 17229 SW Greengate Dr. Sherwood, OR 97140

Candy For Strangers #1 An excellent debut by a fella named Dave who can write quite well. This zine is primarily text-based and reads a bit like somebody's diary. But without the safe, vagueness prevalent in so many autobiographical zines. Dave's level of articulation is a couple notches above the rest too. Reflections, opinions, politics, information, dumpster adventures, and more. A captivating read. (PK)

PO Box 741, Brunswick OH, 44212

Charonzine #2 Charonzine is interesting because it is a collective zine. That means that anyone who wants to contribute to the zine can, and that is what makes up the content. I like the idea of a zine being written as a collective. I think it definitely adds more to the sense of a punk community than one guy sitting in his room ranting about how much he likes the new Fugazi album. Unfortunately, there are some flaws to creating a zine this way. Because there are so many different writers, the quality of the zine is a mixed bag. For the most part the stuff in Charonzine is pretty well done, but there are a few things that are just stupid (like the straight edge superhero comic). Another flaw in doing a collective zine is that because the subject matter that comes in is all over the map (Charonzine has reviews, short stories, comics, sports stories, political rants...) it's hard to keep the zine coherent. Such a wide variety can be good if put together well, but it can also be a confusing mess. Fortunately, Charonzine avoids most of these pitfalls very well and creates an overall very interesting little zine, especially the interview with Refused, and the article on Rudi Dutschke. I hope to see more from the Charon Collective in the future. (JK)

Charon Collective, Horagasse 9, 2500 Baden, Austria

Cheapskate #5 "Not A Crust Zine!" is what appears on the bottom left corner of this zine and had that not been their, I would have guessed it was. It has been awhile since I've seen a photocopied zine with 8.5 x 11 pages stapled down the binding. Layout wise, this style reverts back to the 1993 era of zines and is mostly music based with Absence, C.A.S.S. Records, Bourgeois Filth, and The Bouncing Souls. As far as articles are concerned, there are decent articles taking an anti-cop, anti-republican stance. The Dreaded Grocery Store Game Part 2 is fucking hilarious and had me in tears laughing so if nothing else is of interest, you might want to give this zine a look for that alone. (BR)

\$1 to Mike, P.O. Box 20553, Ferndale, MI 48220

Cool Music #1 Hmmm. "Cool Music". I like cool music! Cool Music focuses on Punk, Oi, Ska, Rockabilly, Swing, Garage, Surf, Lounge. This issue features interviews with Nashville Pussy, Citizen Fish, album and zine reviews. The signs of an abusive man, an article about how Nazi Skinhead is an oxymoron, and a tale of how Ska saved the authors life. You have probably seen this zine a hundred times before. Not bad, but nothing too original. Good interviews and decent writing, nothing to write home about, but a solid effort nonetheless. (JK)

\$2.00 Cool Music Box 78068, 2606 Commercial Dr. Vancouver, BC V5N 5W1 Canada.

Countrycide #3 The contributors to this Swedish zine have a better grasp on English grammar and sentence structure than do most US and UK zine writers. The intellect behind these words fuels a great many thoughts on sex, sXe and a number of social issues. Thoughts of Ionesco, Scoff and the G-7 Welcoming Committee are interviewed. Caitlin's article about childhood experiences with pornography and her current feelings about the subject is the highlight. 48 pages, 8.5" x 5.5" (JVS)

\$2; Henrik Nordstrom, Ingefarsgatan 3, 271 38 YSTAD, Sweden

The Dead Herring #2 Derek seems to have a good head on his shoulders, but unfortunately, most of the interviews in this zine were done either too sarcastically and/or while drunk. Weakerthans (a great interview). Propagandhi, Satanic Surfers and Diesel Boy are the bands here. Some quick pieces on human rights violations, pros and cons of pornography and heavy metal are thrown in, as well. Lots of ads and no staples. 40 pages, 8.5" x 5.5" (JVS)

\$1; Derek, P.O. Box 68007, 471 River Ave., Winnipeg, Manitoba R3L-2V9 CANADA

Down-wind from the Bloodhounds #1 For a first issue, this is a surprisingly together collection of rants, show reviews (the Promise Ring, His Hero Is Gone, Refused) and random journal-style entries. Mack diatribes on society's emphasis on disposable products and about being fired from his job for not being talkative enough. He is also an amazing writer, using his broad vocabulary to its full effect, and what makes the zine so good is that it still remains understandable. 28 pages, 8.5" x 5.5" (JVS)

\$2; Mack Knowles, c/o 44 Queens - Crescent, Chippenham, Wiltshire, SN14 0NJ, UK

Duhhh #9 It's the romance issue, and it's got a bunch of great columns by people who share their vision of what it all means. Interviews with Cavity, 16, and Noothgrush. Reviews. Photos of bands. It's all designed well, too. Recommended. (SM)

Anthony P.O. Box 47, Bradford, BD8 7TX, UK \$2

Every Other #10 All the stuff you've come to expect from every other zine that looks like this is in here: reviews (zines, records and oddly, fountains), and personal political articles (about a college stalker, circumcision and the excesses of the pharmaceutical industry as illustrated by promotional lunches). What distinguishes this zine from others is the incredibly uninformed rant about exclusive distro deals through distributors like Lumberjack. Instead of being a journalist and calling the distro—or the labels distributed

by them—Gene decides just to print a rant explaining how "exclusive rights to sell you something they call punk rock music is defeating the entire purpose of the punk movement. Punk rock is not an exclusive club where only a selected few are allowed to participate. The very existence of punk rock has always been about it being a place or an environment for anyone with an open mind. This exclusivity will destroy punk rock if you buy into it." Hopefully the next issue will include Gene's retraction of this shockingly ignorant rant and an explanation of the real economics of punk distribution and how for many labels, exclusive distribution with a national distributor—especially one as reputable and honest as Lumberjack seems to be—is the difference between being a viable label that contributes to the culture and one that can barely afford to put out three records a year. (DS)

PO Box 14672 Richmond, VA 23221

Free Thought Process #2 Kind of a mish-mash punkzine done by a young gun named Lowell. Personal thoughts, poetry, drawings, comics, fuck Nike, fuck Pat Roberts, an interview with William Blum, short fiction, TWA Flight 800, etc. A little scattered but with good intentions. (PK)

\$?: PO Box 23055, Shawnee Mission KS, 66203

F.T.W #1 F.T.W recalls the basic necessities of what a zine should contain: An angry old guy ranting about various shit. Photocopied pages drawn mostly in felt tip marker and a picture of some old black lady with the words, "You are Gay" superimposed over top (don't read more into that than there is). I can't really say much more about this but it's really freakin' hilarious and throws all that PC crap right out the window. A good ol' nerdy beer drinkin' kind of zine. The world needs more zines like this. Better than a blue hog in winter. (JK)

F.T.W 2700 Ellendale Place #208 Los Angeles, CA 90007 \$1.00

Heinous #5 What a zine should be: narrowly focused and impeccably well researched. Heinous is about daredevils, with its heart set especially on motorcycle jumpers. I find zines like this compulsively readable, no matter what the subject. The author's love for the subject is contagious. Before I picked up Heinous, I didn't really think much about daredevils (at least not since I was in third grade and wanted to be a stuntman), but I was fascinated by the stories about "Human Flies" that scale skyscrapers and and 70s stuntwoman Debbie Lawler. Also included is an up-to-date story about what Evel Kineval's doing now—as well as an exhaustive discography of his records (the music kind, not the

Guiness Book kind). The only letdown with Heinous was the two out-of-place articles about Bob Newhard and the Seattle Pilots, an old baseball team. (DS) \$2; PO Box 12065 Seattle, WA 98102

If The Bible Told You To Jump Off A Cliff... #3 Articles on working in a diner kitchen, growing up with a police officer as a father, childhood sports participation, Chernobyl, and reviews. A lengthy interview with Moral Panic. This zine attempts to vaguely political, but it appears that the editor has enough issues of his own to resolve before he can work for truly positive change. 42 pages, 8.5" x 5.5" (JVS)

\$1.25 or trade; Chad Cronk, 4006 Lakeview Avenue, Regina, Saskatchewan S4S 1H9 CANADA

IndieCent #3 This is a glossy "indie" magazine with design only a few shades away from being clean enough for the newsstands. Interviews with the Ladybug Transistor, the Get Up Kids, Burning Airlines, and Godheadsilo, among others. The interviews aren't merely transcribed, but written in essay format, which is much appreciated. The writing here is top-notch, but unfortunately, most of the writer/reviewers within seem unfamiliar with the scene they are covering. 68 pages, 8.5" x 11" (JVS)

\$3; 266 12th Street #2, Brooklyn, NY 11215

Industrialization #16 Even though I really haven't been into Industrial music since the early 90's attack of the Revolting Cocks, Ministry and Laibach, I still found this magazine to be a great read. Inside you will find Chris and Cosey, Rammstein, Front Line Assembly and lots more happy bands. This is probably the best Industrial magazine out there today. Towards the end of the issue is an interview with the singer from Information Society. Pure Energy, bum.bum-bum bum bum bum pure energy...That song ruled! (BC) \$10.00= 4 issues. PO Box 23184, Pleasant Hill, CA. 94523

Innocence Regained #2 Innocence Regained is a very well thought out political zine. I enjoyed most of the articles and stories, and while I may not have totally agreed with all of the view points suggested I still found them interesting. This issue of Innocence Regained contains stories about Mass Transit, Straight Edge, Sexual Freedom, Police and why they suck, Labor issues, Graffiti, and much more. The author makes it clear that he is a vegan and straight-edge, but I felt that the author was trying hard not to sound holier than thou with his opinions and that's good. It is good to see someone creating thought provoking political commentary without being preachy. I really enjoyed this zine and hope to see more in the future. The next issue is supposedly a split issue with Negative Burn, so that should be interesting. Check it out. (JK)

Innocence Regained, PO Box 13274 Chicago, IL 60613

Internal Combustion Wow, what a great little zine. Internal Combustion is beautifully written personal zine about living in the town you live in, and the authors endless search to find somewhere to call home. The author questions how social/economic/geographic mobility has affected the communities we live in, making them more impersonal and spread out. Much of the zine is illustrated with really nice comic drawings and some of the story is told in comic form. The drawings are simple, but really add to the overall package. There is a real melancholy feeling to this whole thing and there is a great sense of isolation portrayed in the writing. This zine does what I think a lot of others try to do, which is take personal experiences and use them to create a story which is universal, in this case, focusing on loneliness. I liked Internal Combustion very much and would be interested in seeing more issues in the future. Highly Recommended. (JK)

Internal Combustion, PO box 673, Portland, OR 97207

Joys of Lawn Care #? A very disjointed collection of random drawings, photos and pieces of prose. It's interesting to look at, sorta, but I got nothing out of it. Just too cryptic. But they did have one cool idea: attach two mini-zines to the center of the zine with the staples. (SM)

P.O. Box 944, San Mateo, CA 94403 \$1

Kumquat #6/Sobstory #1 The last issue of Andrew's old zine and the first of his new one. What appears on the surface as a collection of stories about drinking and skateboarding is actually a thoughtful, introspective look at life in Chicago and the struggle to be happy despite society's definitions of "success." This zine clicks because Andrew is a coherent writer. Andrew interviews skateboarders (about how skating affected their life's perspective) and includes many of his journal entries. 88 pages, 5.5" x 4.5" (JVS)

\$2; Andrew, P.O. Box 138273, Chicago, IL 60613

Loose Screws #15 You know all those shitty zines that litter your floor? You know the kind I'm talking about, the kind you look through and instantly forget the page you just read. The kind that you just wonder why someone is bothering to put out. This is one of them. (DS)

4833 S. Oliver Dr. VA Beach, VA 23455

Manual Resistance #12 "...Maybe I'm just romanticizing the past." Matt says in one of the last articles in MR. This zine is heavily influenced by Cometbus, from the all-caps handwriting, all the way down to the prose style itself. Lots of reflections on relationships, the past, drinking and living. These thoughts come from a confused but altogether sensible and intelligent mind. 52 pages, 8.5" x 5.5" (JVS)

\$1; Matt Resistance, P.O. Box 94632, Lincoln, NE 68509

Midget Breakdancing Digest #9 Newsprint zine mostly covering details of his local Colorado scene. Interviews with the Thumbs, Ed Temple and the Smooths. A tale of a day spent at the Warped Tour, lots of (mostly bland) columns, as well as many reviews and ads. A standard punk zine, if not for the worth of the localized content. 40 pages, 8.5" x 11" (JVS)

\$1; Stuart, 3032 McIntosh Dr., Longmont, CO 80503

Mind Toilet #81 I hate ska music. Bad. This zine seems to have it's main focus on ska music. Despite my rabid distaste for ska, I tried to swallow my pride and read this zine objectively. For the most part, this zine has too much of the usual to be really interesting. There is a Less Than Jake interview and there were too many things I read that bothered me. For instance, the excessive use of the word Bitch and in the Mind Toilet Vocabulary section, they explain words like "Afroblow" and "Niggerdog" and I thought ska was about being antiracist? Stop nitpicking and have a sense of humor? Now I really hate ska music. (BR)

Free in NY, P.O. Box 6132, L.I.C., NY 11106

Muuna Takeena #4 Sort of like a mini Factsheet 5. Tons of zine and record reviews done in English and another European language that I couldn't figure out. But this is a good idea and the cover is a nice drawing of Elvis in the fat years. (BC)

Trade/Stamps or chocolate Timo Palonen Hepokuja 6 B 26, FIN-01200 Vantaa, Finland

The Night of a Million Zillion Ninjas #7 What the fuck is this about? I tried really hard to understand what the hell this thing is supposed to be about but as far as I can tell it is just a bunch of totally unconnected pictures and crude comic drawings that look like they were created on a Kid's computer draw program. There seems to be some sort of vague story line about ninjas running throughout, but that's about it. I really don't know why someone would put this much work into something that makes so little sense but I guess maybe it's just too deep for me and I just don't understand. Who Knows? (JK)

They didn't send an address, but it costs 50 cents or 2 stamps

Obese #1 Included in the debut issue are Powerhouse, Overcast, and Diecast. And there are reviews of things like zines (kudos for the great review of Popsmeat!) and records. And a rant about how it sucks when you go to a show and half of the bands don't show up. A nice edition to the east coast zine world. (BC)

Obese PO Box 15499 Boston, MA. 02215

Outback #20 I'm positive that this has been brought up a thousand times before but, Outback has been around basically since Elvis walked the planet. The funny thing is that I never remember really liking

Outback all that much and am still not won over. This issue features Braid, 30 Foot Fall, Elliot Smith and an annoying write-up on Seinfeld. People need to get over this show, save your tears for when the Simpsons go off the air. The best piece in this issue is the story about the Instant Message guy named Big Booty. For what it's worth, Outback has always maintained a top notch layout but the content does nothing to interest me. (BR)

free, P.O. Box 780132, Orlando, FL 32878

Par Avion #2 A great zine with a unique hook: this guy only does mail interviews. In fact, the entire zine is dedicated to the mail. He reprints people's responses exactly as he received them, crappy handwriting and all. Running below many of the interviews are obscure mail-related facts. It's zines like Par Avion that keep the zine scene vital! (DS)
\$2; 15 Slocum St. #3 Providence, RI 02909

Pelasgus #1,2,3 They sent us the first three issues of this comic so instead of review each one separately, I'll just cover 'em' all at once. Pelasgus is the epic tale of the rise and fall of an alien civilization, all centered around a wise seer named Pelasgus. Pelasgus has been around since the beginning of life on the planet Arcadia, when two visiting aliens create him from the primordial ooze. Pelasgus then serves as a kind of wise leader and father to the civilization that begins to spring up around him, helping them to set up a government, plant crops and settle disputes. While this is clearly an epic tale, a lot happens in the first three issues and I can very confidently say that this is one of the most creative, entertaining and original comics I have read in a long time. Both the art and writing are beautifully done, and I eagerly read all three issues in one sitting. This is one of the few independent comics that has kept me interested the whole time and always guessing what was going to happen next. Jason Sandberg's art is ten times better than most of the "I can't draw but that doesn't matter" type comics out there today, and the style fits the story very well. The writing is great and I would even not hesitate to call it, "educational", as it's portrayal of the formation of an alien civilization sheds much light on the state of our own civilization and many of the problems facing us today. While the idea of a comic about forming a civilization may sound boring, it is pulled off with enough humor and bizarre little extras to keep the story from ever becoming dull. As you can tell I really liked Pelasgus and anyone out there interested in a good, intelligent comic with great characters and a interesting and original plot should do themselves a favor and go find an issue of Pelasgus. (JK)

\$2.00 plus \$1.00 shipping Pelasgus Comics Group, 1825 Trailway Dr. Apartment 3 Eagan, MN 55122

Piece of Dump #1 Fancy graphic design programs can make the stuff in your zine look good. But if the stuff in it isn't good to begin with, your zine still sucks. This zine is an excellent example of that principle. The boring interviews and uninspired columns are no better because of the fancy layout. This has interviews with Help Fanzine, Second Chance and Atari, a band that said to improve the hardcore scene "more chicks need to start wearing sexier clothing." (SM)
2447 Winterwood Ave., Las Vegas, NV 89122 \$1

Planet Chocko #4 Interviews with Bobby Steele (the Undead, ex-Misfits) and "fantasy model" Stacy Walker. An interview with Shaolin monk Sifu Shi Yan-Ming seemed to have been conducted more for the editor's love of Kung Fu movies than out of any respect for the monk's dedication to his practice and skill. Four pages of poetry. Planet Chocko meanders and lacks cohesion. 32 pages, 8.5" x 5.5" (JVS)
\$1; Chocko, P.O. Box 1160, Maywood, NJ 07607

Probe #7 Another issue of soft-porn for the punk world. It could be just me, but this issue of Probe doesn't have the same wit and funny stories that previous issues have had. The letters section is the highlight and the Kris' boy reviews are not as good as Aaron's, but a nice change of pace. Most pick up this zine for the pictures of the naked people any ways. This issue won't disappoint with a lot of boy and girl pictures. The music reviews have gotten to large (by his own admittance) and I feel as if there wasn't as much effort into this issue. (EA)
\$5; P.O. Box 5068 Pleasonton, CA 94566

Propensity #1 A quick read at sixteen pages, this zine touches lightly upon issues such as child neglect, suicide and loneliness. The drawings are mostly of spike-haired punk rockers, and cut-and-paste clips litter the pages. 16 pages, 8.5" x 5.5" (JVS)
2 stamps; Mis c/o Devin, 902 Sara Circle, Port Jeff. Station, NY 11776

Prying #1 Anger, spite, loathing, self hatred, and that's just in the introduction. Man, I don't really know how to review something like this because it's obviously somebody's deep and heart felt inner feelings and to just say "this sucks" seems like a really jerky thing to do. I didn't not like this zine, but I can't imagine actually trying to find this and read it by choice. I guess if you like reading really painful poetry and deep anger filled journal entries about smashing peoples faces in with steel toed boots, go for it. (JK)

Prying, 2124 S. Summit, Sioux Falls, SD 57105 -free

Scout's Handbook #10 It appears to me that this zine is more of an emo journal than anything else. Could be good or could be bad? Halfway through this zine, I admittedly had to put it down because it started to

bore me. There are way too many sappy moments and such to make it come off realistic or sincere. I realize that I am discounting the author's feelings by saying this but this was the feeling I got when reading. The audience for this type of zine is too predictable to appeal to my tastes but what do I know? (BR)

\$1, 518 W. Clay St. #2, Richmond, VA 23220

Slave #2 This newsprint zine is heavy on the politics, but it is obvious that the three editors really care about the topics they are covering. Graffiti, the Cuban Revolution and the military's shady tactics are all topics. An anonymous submission from a rape victim is a moving item of truth and the highlight of this issue. Interviews with Boy Sets Fire, New Day Rising, and Reversal of Man. Lengthy reviews of books and music. 96 pages, 8.5" x 11" (JVS)

\$2; P.O. Box 10093, Greensboro, NC 27404

Slut #54 A collection of short essays on things that aren't very interesting. There's a two-page assessment on the state of pants (the garment), as well as bits on punctuation, a funeral, state troopers, giving bums change, and Canada mania. Reviews and a short interview with Sonic Youth also are included. Blah. (SM)
41 Cornbury Court, Woings Mills, MD, 21117

South Chicago ARA Alert #1 This is the publication of the South Chicago Anti-Racist Action group, and it's packed with stuff. Much of it is newspaper clippings dealing with racism (like the guys in Texas who dragged a black man to his death). But there are other substantial pieces on race and race relations, as well as contacts and other useful things. A good effort for a great cause. (SM)
P.O. Box 721, Homewood, IL 60430 \$?

Spank Fan Zine #25 This issue of Spank features tons of zine and album reviews, as well as interviews with Zen Guerrilla, Apocalypse Hoboken, The Exploder, Bangs, Four Letter Word, Dead Weight Mail-order, and a few others. Overall I liked this pretty well. Nothing too original, but it offers really good interviews and a much wider range of reviews than are seen in most zines of this nature. Good bathroom reading. (JK)
Spank Fan Zine, 1004 Rose Avenue Des Moines, IA 50315-3000 \$3.00 ppd

Spins #30,31 Brent and the crew are still doing a damn fine job at Tail Spins. This is a very pro-type magazine that entertains as well as covers the indie/punk scene. Issue 30 has an interview with Sweep the Lag Johnny, and #31 feature the Oblivians. And who can forget the inept look at "The History of Cannibalism" in issue #30. Wow, what a zine! (BC)
\$3.00 PO Box 1860, Evanston, IL 60204

Status Magazine #7 Yet another of the fairly well-designed, thick as hell, stuffed full of ads hardcore zines that seem to be all the rage right now. And like almost all the others, Status lacks any personality. Interviews with Indecision, All, Converge and more. My guess is if you're into this scene, you probably already have this and if you're not, then this is going to fall very low on your list of zines to buy. A side note: there are 30 1/2 pages of ads in this 64 page zine. While I understand that it's a free publication (in person) and obviously there are costs that need to be recouped, why not charge for it and cut down the ad space? (DS)

\$2; PO Box 1500 Thousand Oaks, CA 91358

Stay Free! #15 The zine basically bothered me to no end. The constant talk of advertising and selling caused instant disinterest on my end. There is a definite target audience but I can't see anyone in the punk scene being in this group. The little music coverage inside has nothing to do with independent scene, let alone punk rock. Try sending elsewhere next time. (BR)

\$3, P.O. Box 306, Prince St. Station, New York, NY 10012

Steinbeck Salinas Murder Report #4 A thrown-together cut and paste deal, made up mostly of clippings from the local newspaper about murders and shootings and stuff. It's a very small zine—three inches wide by two tall—and has a few photos strewn throughout. I guess the idea is to get something in the mail every month. I'd rather just have something with substance once a year. (SM)

P.O. Box 853, Castroville, CA 95012 \$2/one year subscription (12 issues)

Stop Smiling #7 This rules. A big, thick professional-looking magazine with a glossy color cover and a bunch of fun stuff inside. There's so much I didn't get to read it all (yet). It's the "belated love" issue, and comes with a special "Love and Relationship for Dummy's" section, modeled after those ceaseless "... for Dummies" books that litter computer sections in book stores. It's pretty funny. Fiction, true stories, stuff on Star Wars, a bunch of stuff on UFOs including a guide to the Freedom of Information Act which centers around an attempt to get the goods on flying saucers. Interviews with The Notwist, Helium, Quasi, Beatnik Filmstars, the Make Up, the author of a sex book, The Apples, and a dominatrix. Also, 150 record reviews. It's a double issue (160 pages), and the first 2,000 come with a Silver Jews 7". Yay. (SM)

P.O. Box 2038, Darien, IL 60561 \$6 w/record, \$5 without

Stot #3 This zine has a NoMeansNo live review and some other stories. (BC)

Stot Zine Rektor Steensgt. 10 B, 5500 Haugesund.

Supreme Nothing #2 A zine filled with decent artwork and comics done by this Brian Walker dude. This is some good stuff. It is 2 bucks but he will send you a ton of stuff. It is all printed on good quality paper, so you can see all of his madness. (BC)

\$2.00 B. Walker PO Box 7362 Richmond, VA. 23221

Table Rockers #2? I have to admit it. I liked this zine. The layout is sloppy at times but the content seemed sincere enough to satisfy the constant nit-picking that I'm known for. The basis of this zine is personal writings by a 14 year old girl whose interests lie in social issues and hardcore. I don't agree with everything she had to say but the interest is there so I appreciate the effort. It was worth the time spent reading. (BR)

Free, 2520 Dunbar Lane, Green Bay, WI 53404

TopRope Magazine Vol 2 #3 A DIY rock climbing magazine. Not being a rock climber, I can't vouch for the relevance of this zine, but knowing that things like this exist gets me psyched. (DS)

PO Box 1317 Austin, TX 78767-1317

Trash Times #4 Above par garage enthusiast zine that really caught my attention. The author definitely loves his music and does a superb interview with Lightning Beat-Man (one of the most under-appreciated group probably because they are from Europe and not the USA). The majority of this zine is reviews, but movie reviews, I kinda liked reading about movies, because lord knows that we all read way to many music reviews. Tagged along are a few short pieces about Chicago in the 60's and a King Louie interview. More content would make this a real winner. (EA)

\$2 PO Box 248 Glenview, IL 60025

The Trouble With Normal #34 If this wasn't so thrown-together, it could be decent. Interviews with Lynyrd's Innards, Chumbawumba, Eugene Chadbourne and Servotron. Live reviews. That's it. Cut and paste and put together all haphazard. The Chumbawumba interview was good and will be continued next issue. Servotron was amusing. Did I mention the layout sucks? (SM)

P.O. Box 329, Columbia, MO 65205-0329 \$1

The Trouble with Normal #35 This issue of the Trouble with Normal features show reviews, album and zine reviews, an interview with Chumbawumba, and a really great interview feature with Jello Biafra. The Jello Biafra story is a transcription of a press conference Biafra held for a bunch of zinesters in Kansas City. As always, Biafra is interesting and thought provoking and his opinions raise many interesting questions on a variety of controversial issues, including the War on Drugs and Chumbawumba, who are featured in the same issue. Regardless of your opinion of chumbawumba, (I think they suck a fat dick personally)

their interview is interesting and asks the band good questions. Overall, this is a very enjoyable issue, and is well worth checking out, even if only for the Biafra piece, which is worth the price in itself. (JK)

The Trouble with Normal, PO Box 329 Columbia, MO 65205-0329. USA

Urban Legends #2 Although the authors mention that their zine is focused on urban legends, none are mentioned that I saw. Anyhow, Urban Legends is a decent read that has interviews with Sally Skull and Robynn Iwata of Cub fame. The main focus of this zine really seems to deal with women's issues, veganism and DIY and all of the writings are informative and well done. As with many zines today, no new ground is uncovered and thus, Urban Legends is left floating amongst the rest and eventually, lost in the shuffle. (BR)

\$1, 3001 Breeze Terrace, Austin, TX 78722

What The...? #1 I stand corrected, this is the second zine I've gotten this month with staples in the binding, not like it matters at all though. Although short, this zine has some thought provoking insights and some pieces that turned my stomach. There is a reprint of Emma Goldman's New Declaration of Independence, as well as a list of some useful and entertaining web pages to check into. The part of this zine is the pages where the editor prints some information on a website called godhatesfags.com that aroused interest and made my stomach turn in the same moment. I have to see this website for myself. Regardless, What The...? was a worthwhile endeavor and I recommend it without haste. (BR)

Free, P.O. Box 20105, Green Acres P.O., Thunder Bay, Ontario, P7E 6P2 Canada

The Woman Clothed By the Sun Christian symbolism. The Cycle of Violence, intimidation, male female stereotypes. Promise Keepers poo, short fiction, interviews with the locals, the American educational system, and other interesting tidbits. Nice packaging. (PK)

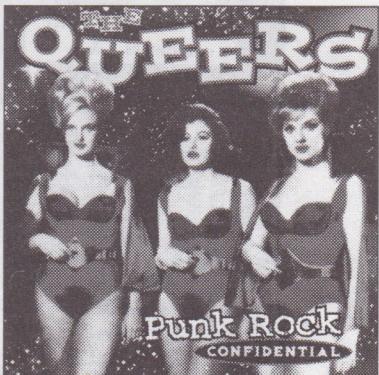
75 cents; Billy the Kid, 511 Woodward, Apt. #213, Austin TX, 78704

Yard Wide Yarns Summer 1998 The contributions issue, not a fair way to assess our first issue of Yard Wide Yarns. Most of this issue is reprinted from other zines. A nice Donnas interview that was short, but asked a few good questions. We didn't need a reprint of a bunch of stories that are not spectacular. It seems to me that if one is going to reprint a bunch of stories that they be the best ones we have ever read. With the exception of one or two this zine reads like 90% of the zines that come through our mail. (EA)

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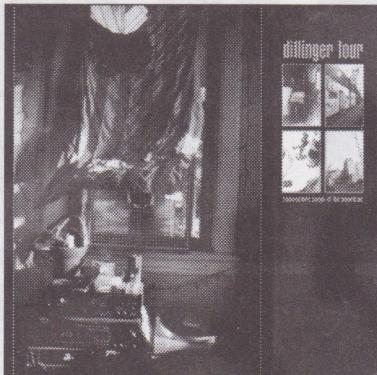


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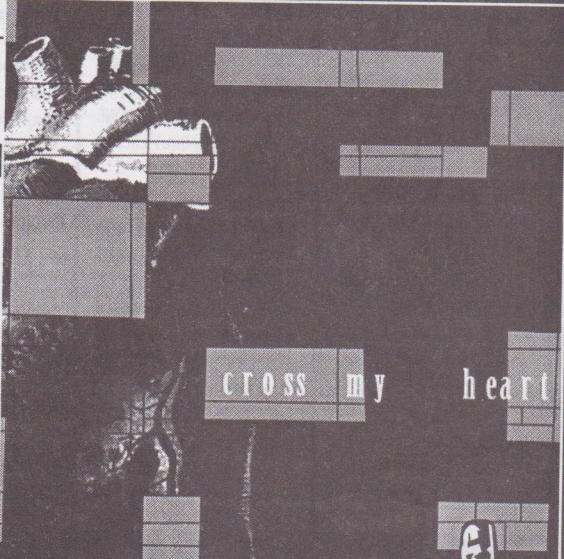
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PP23 CHUMBAWAMBA: Have they been able to successfully subvert the mainstream for their own political agenda or have they—like so many bands before them—succumbed to capital's lies? Also inside are interviews with GEARHEAD FANZINE's Mike Lavella, LOVEITT RECORDS, SUBTERRANEAN DISTRIBUTION, THE VAN PELT and THE YOUNG PIONEERS. Articles on the PIRATE RADIO movement, one person's experiences going from being a singer in a punk band to being an OUTREACH WORKER FOR HOMELESS YOUTH, GURILLA POSTERING and the RECENT CONTROVERSIES SURROUNDING THE TEAMSTERS. Plus there's everything else you like! 154 pgs

PP24 THE ART & DESIGN ISSUE. Featuring tons of interviews with punk artists both well known to the not-so-well-known. PP24 attempts to paint a picture (no pun intended) of the current state of art and punk by talking to the people doing it. Interviewed in this issue are comic activist SETH TOBOKMAN, designers ART CHANTRY and HOUSE INDUSTRIES, photographers CYNTHIA CONNOLLY, CHRISSEY PIPER and PAUL DRAKE and tattoo artist KIM SAIGH. Articles about the poster art of FRANK KOZIK, STATE SIDELINING OF THE ARTS, the CURRENT STATE OF RADICAL ART, and DESIGN IN THE UNDERGROUND. 164 pgs. multiple covers

PP27 A talk with KATHLEEN HANNA. In this rare, in-depth interview, Kathleen talks about the end of Bikini Kill, her new project Julie Ruin and her feelings on punk, feminism, economics, art and more. Kathleen has never been one to mince words, and she doesn't hold

PP25 Punk Planet looks at the GROWING GIRL SKATE UNDERGROUND in a 20 page section. Also in this issue are interviews with SPAZZ, DESOTO RECORDS, The WORLD INFERNO FRIENDSHIP SOCIETY and BY THE GRACE OF GOD's Duncan Barlow explains why he's retiring from the hardcore scene. Plus a talk with OUTPUNK's Matt Wobensmith about why he's stopping his seminal zine & label. Articles on SPOKEN WORD & 25 YEARS OF CHOICE. Plus, PP25 looks at the REAL REASONS THE CLINTON ADMINISTRATION WANTS TO GO BACK TO IRAQ. 144 pgs

PP26 STEVE ALBINI, talks about everything from working for major labels to playing guitar to the state of punk rock today. Also interviewed in PP26: AVAIL, SMART WENT CRAZY, SERVOTRON, POLYVINYL RECORDS, COMPOUND RED and RED MONKEY. Articles include a piece about TOUCH & GO RECORDS' RECENT LAW-SUIT WITH THE BUTTHOLE SURFERS—Lawyer and Punk Planet columnist Darren Cahr gives us the play by play. NEEDLE EXCHANGE PROGRAMS can't they get federal funding—find out why. WHOLE FOODS has become the dominant player in the natural foods game—PP exposes the whole truth. Plus, PP writes the story of THE TRAGIC DEATH OF GRAFFITI ARTIST TIE. Jam-packed at 156 pages.

PP27 A talk with KATHLEEN HANNA. In this rare, in-depth interview, Kathleen talks about the end of Bikini Kill, her new project Julie Ruin and her feelings on punk, feminism, economics, art and more. Kathleen has never been one to mince words, and she doesn't hold

back this time either. Also interviewed in PP27: DISCOUNT, CHROM-TECH, ASSÜCK, the PEECHEES, and PRANK RECORDS' Ken Sanderson. Articles? Yep yep. In "Rebels Without a Cause," Punk Planet looks into the GROWING HYSTERIA SURROUNDING TEEN VIOLENCE—PP peels back the media's theme music and info-graphics and looks at the real problems and real solutions. Jon Strange breaks the law and travels with a group BRINGING HUMANITARIAN AID INTO IRAQ—this trip has been all but ignored by the mainstream press. Punk Planet had it first! Marc Bayard is the first person to teach A COLLEGE COURSE BASED ON PUNK—he writes about his experience in "Punk 101." Finally, TWO ANTI-RACIST SKINHEADS WERE MURDERED IN LAS VEGAS THIS JULY—Punk Planet investigates. 156 pgs

PP28 looks at the GROWING HEALTHCARE CRISIS IN AMERICA THROUGH THE EYES OF A OFTEN-OVERLOOKED GROUP: MUSICIANS. As author Alex McCown explains, "a grand total of zero labels in America today currently provide health care for their artists." McCown tells the story of a number of different bands—both signed and unsigned, indie and major—and how they have struggled under a system that cares more about producing records than the people recording them. It's an important issue—and one only available in Punk Planet. Also in this issue: Punk Planet continues its series of interviews with influential people in punk

with a talk with KEVIN SECONDS; in this very personal interview, Kevin frankly discusses his time with 7 Seconds as well as his life since. FILMMAKER PENELOPE SPHEERIS talks with Punk Planet film columnist Sarah Jacobson about her new film, DECLINE OF WESTERN CIVILIZATION 3. JETS TO BRAZIL, the buzz band of the moment, talks with Punk Planet about life after Jawbreaker and Texas is the Reason. Other interviews include THE GET UP KIDS and ATOM AND HIS PACKAGE and RESIN RECORDS. PP28 also delves into the current sampling controversy surrounding NEGATIVLAND with a talk with Mark Hosler, mastermind behind the group and an article surrounding the legal ramifications of sampling. In addition to the major labels & healthcare article, Punk Planet takes a look at THE "LEGACY" OF BILL CLINTON—find out 10 real reasons to not like the guy. Plus, the article "It's (not) a White World" investigates RACE IN PUNK—it's not a pretty picture. Finally, "Return to the Holy Land" brings us to ISRAEL THROUGH THE EYES OF AN EXPATRIATE. All this plus the regular columns, reviews DIY and much, much more. Our last newsprint issue!! 156 pgs

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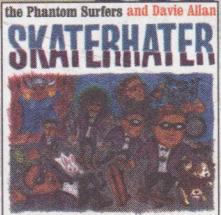
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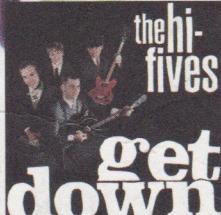
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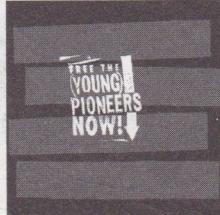
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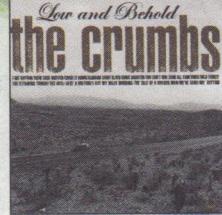
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